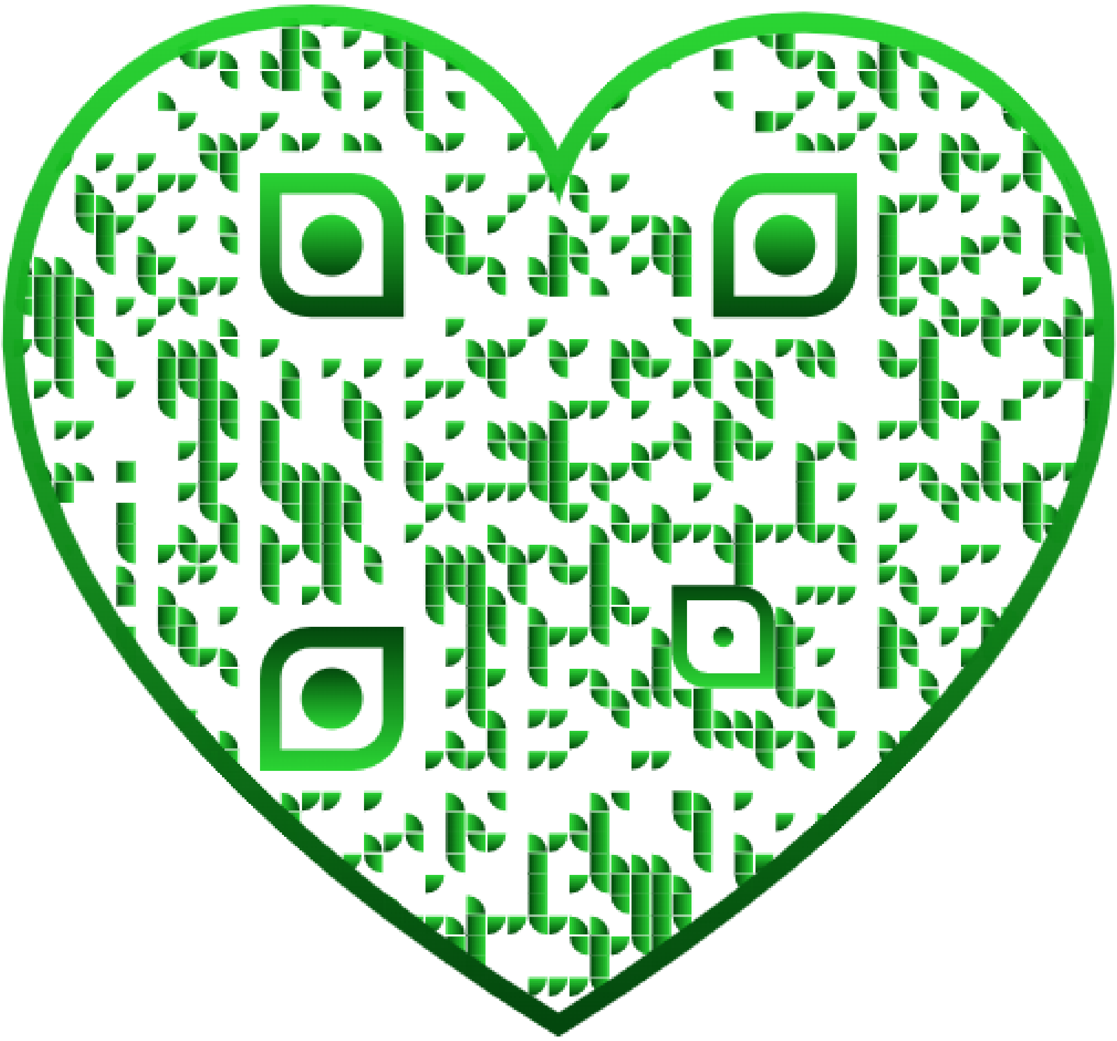
AMERICAN
craft

SUMMER 2025



In the wake of Hurricane Helene, the Center for Craft quickly mobilized to raise and distribute $1.3 million—and counting—to more than 900 craft artists and arts organizations in Western North Carolina.

The Center recently launched the WNC Craft Futures Cohort to invest in the longer-term recovery of 40 artists from our community. Recipients were awarded $15,000 each and are participating in six months of mentorship and programming to rebuild their art practices.

WNC Craft Futures:
FROM HERE

An exhibition celebrating the work of 40 craft artists in Western North Carolina impacted by Hurricane Helene

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April 11–August 30, 2025

Community Reception & Open Studios: June 12, 2025, 5:30–7:30pm

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Geoffrey Bowton
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Julianna Chioma
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The Center for Craft amplifies how and why craft matters by increasing access to resources that catalyze artists and scholars nationwide. Proudly based in Asheville, we have been at the center of the conversation about the future of craft since 1996.

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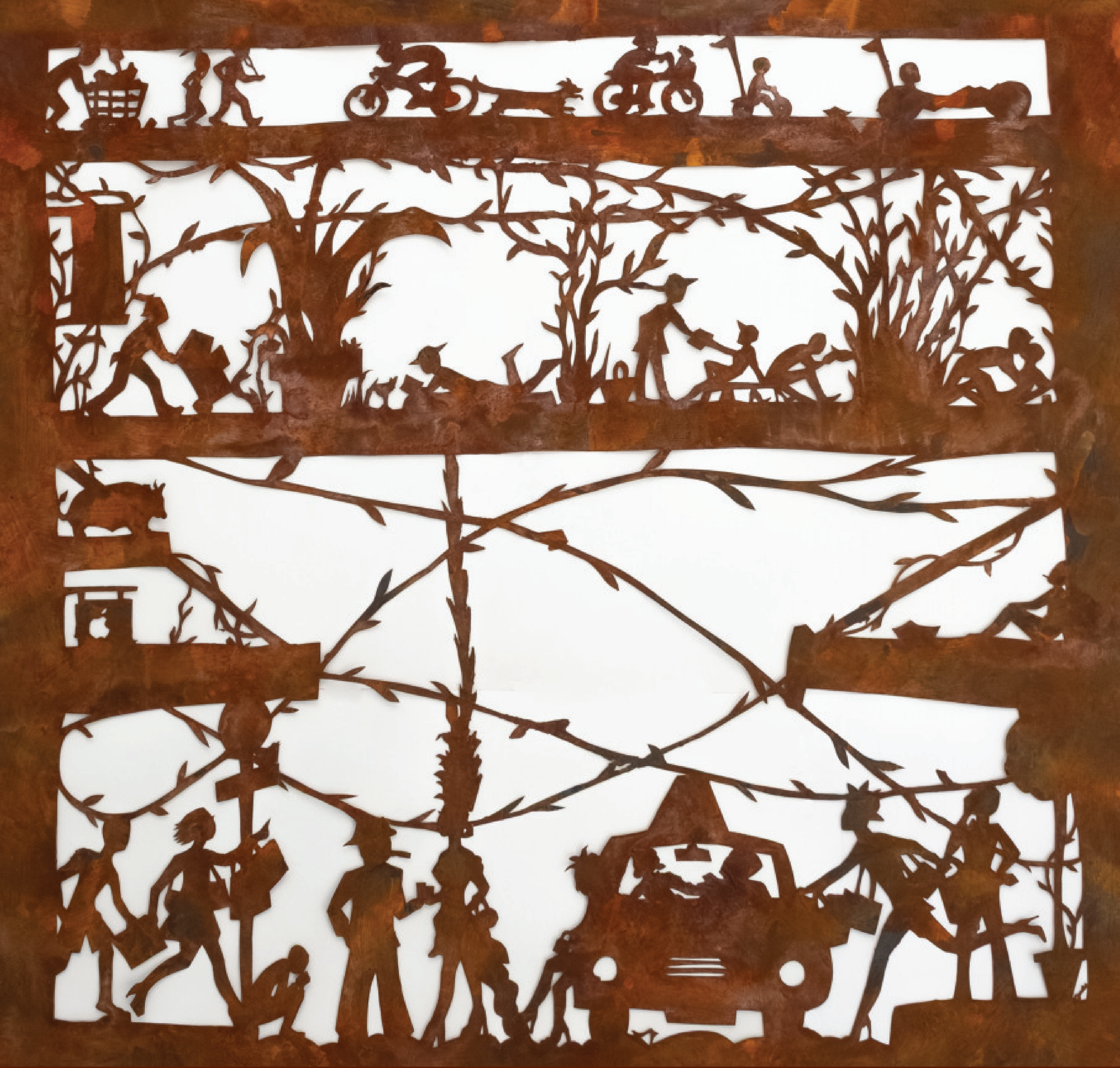

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Béatrice Coron, detail of *Hooks and Hookers*, cut and painted Tyvek

AMERICAN
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SUMMER 2025 / VOL. 85, No. 2

retreat

reconnection
recreation
space

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Locals tell us about the makers, places, and spaces of this Southern arts mecca.

ON THE COVER:
Kevin Reiswig's reclaimed cherry and poplar *Linger Lounger*. Photo by Sam Alison. **page 24**.

THIS PAGE:
A soda-fired stoneware vessel by ceramist Kate Pak, who contributed to our coverage of craft in Atlanta. **page 36**.

Photo by Ben Rollins.

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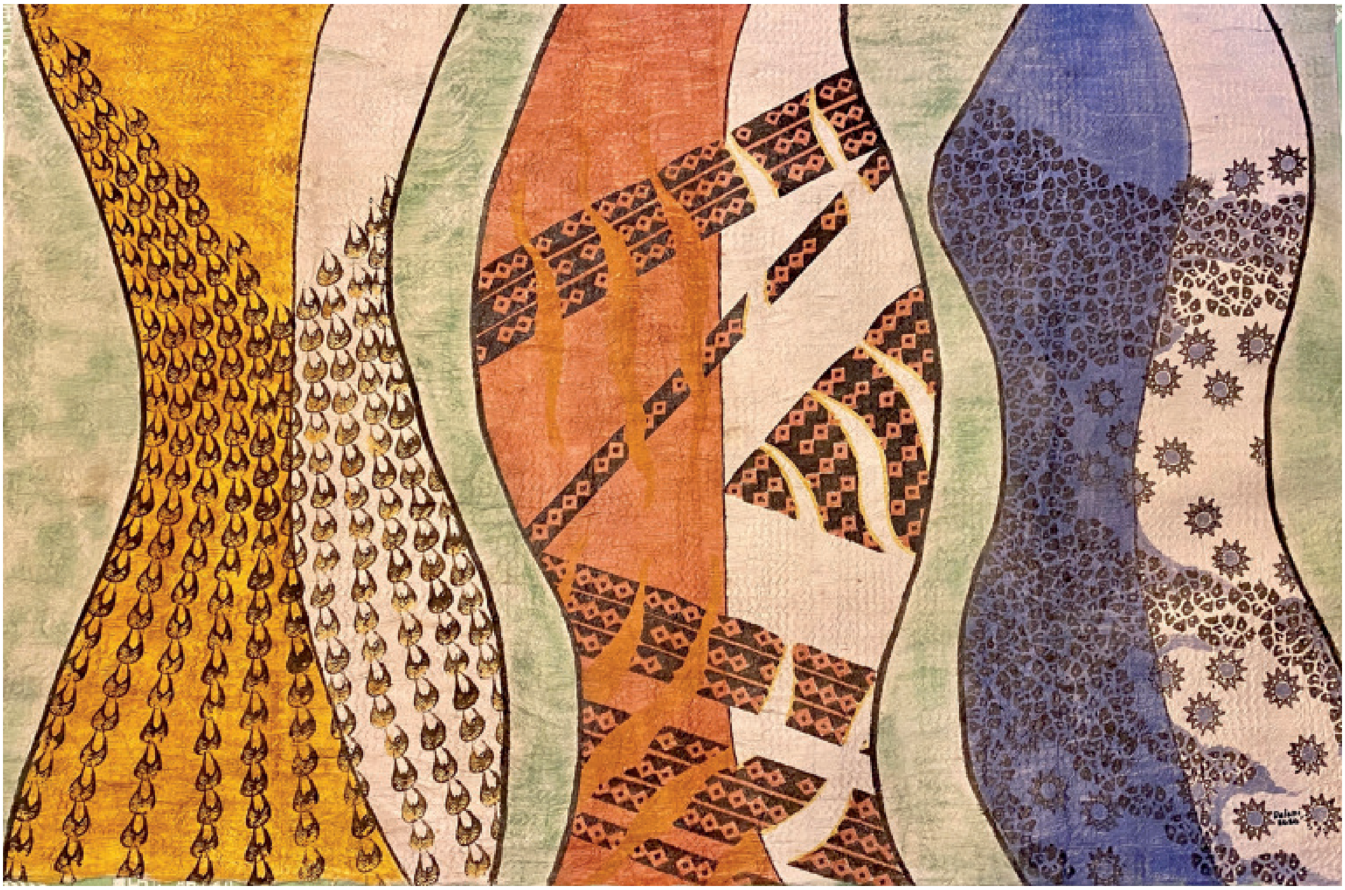
ABOVE: A ceramic creature by Los Angeles–based Satoko Okuno, who has exhibited at HeyThere Projects in Joshua Tree, California. **page 72**. LEFT: Erica Moody's sumptuous *Lamina* utensils. **page 76**.

TOP: Photo by Aaron Smith. BOTTOM: Photo by Erica Moody.



Made from kapa, a Hawaiian bark cloth, Dalani Tanahy's *Mana Wahine*, 2018, represents three Hawaiian goddesses: Kalawahine (water), Pele (fire, lightening, wind), and Hina (moon, ocean, feminine power), 28 x 32 in. **page 30**.

Photo by Dalani Tanahy.

Retreat. I have always thought of weekends and vacations as creative sabbaticals. I may take a trip to explore textiles and local foods, tuck myself away in the woods and make sculptures from found materials, or rearrange objects in my home until the space feels fresh. We all need time and space to fortify our bodies and souls—especially in times of great change.

When we started planning this issue over a year ago, the first thing I envisioned was featuring spa-like spaces and handcrafted works that bring peace and calm. What you'll discover here instead, I'm happy to share, is a more nuanced approach to connections between craft and the theme *retreat*.

One can simply retreat into a good seat, for example. On the cover is a chair by Kevin Reiswig of Washington, who finds refuge in his work and asks us to reimagine how we use wood. Also in these pages are ceramic furniture that embodies both the hard and the soft, made by Kelsie Rudolph in Montana, and a fantastical sculpted folly by Brooklyn-based Nicholas Devlin that invites one in to rest and dream.

A retreat often involves slowing down or learning. So we go to Hawai'i, where makers take their time to harvest, process, and shape kapa—a Hawaiian bark cloth—into jewelry, sculpture, and wall hangings. We drop in to Denver's Craftsman & Apprentice, where kids learn to work with their hands. And we visit Georgia, where Oyster Bamboo creates old-school fly rods and teaches workshops on how to do the same.

We can feel a sense of retreat when exploring spaces that evoke the artistic spirit and connect us to place. Our in-depth coverage of craft in Atlanta offers a guide to exploring the city. The high desert of Wyoming, where silversmith Amy Erickson lives, inspires her as she engraves bits, spurs, and jewelry. Joshua Tree, a popular California vacation spot, is the perfect setting for the artists represented at HeyThere Projects. And in New Jersey, a home built for craft is a magical setting for the incredible collection of Lou and Sandy Grotta.

May you find a renewed sense of wonder and inspiration to create a retreat—whatever that looks like for you—as you explore our Summer issue.

Karen

KAREN OLSON / Editor in Chief

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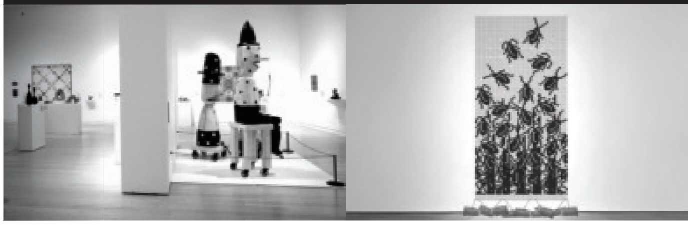
Left Image: *46th Annual Contemporary Crafts* exhibition, Feb – Apr 2025. Right Image: Ann Morton, *Invasion Species*, 2024, wire grid, repurposed t-shirts, sandbags, 6 feet x 11 feet 7 inches.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Meet some of the many writers, artists, and photographers who contributed to this issue.

Amy Erickson makes Western bits, spurs, and jewelry for her business, Erickson Bit and Spur. "I have studied with and done fellowships with several master western engravers, gun engravers, and bit and spur makers," says Erickson, who recently received a fellowship from the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. Here, she writes about working in the shop she built in Evanston, Wyoming. **page 8**.

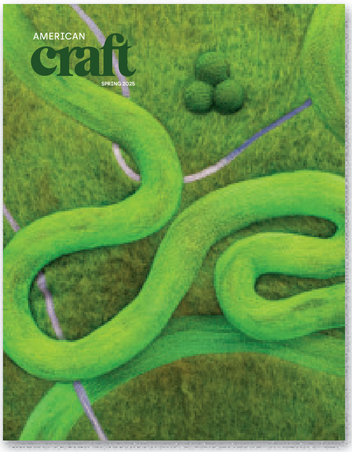
For her profile of woodworker Kevin Reiswig, **Lauren Gallow** visited his peaceful home and studio in Port Townsend, Washington. "My favorite takeaway was the feeling of walking through the forest—it was like running a mental comb through my brain, smoothing things out and removing the knots," says the Seattle-based arts and design writer, who has also written for *Dwell* and *The New York Times*. **page 24**.

Writer, musician, and artist **Joe Hart** served as a senior editor at *Utne Reader* and *Public Art Review*. He currently produces *The Boscobel Dial*, a small-town newspaper in rural Wisconsin. Diving deep into the process of bamboo fly rod making has Hart hoping to cast a line into the world-class trout stream that runs a half mile from his front door. **page 36**.

A widely published arts writer and critic, **Cinqué Hicks** was most recently the editor in chief of *ArtsATL*, Atlanta's only multidisciplinary, arts-focused publication. He has also been an editor at *Art Papers* and the *International Review of African American Art*. For this issue he wrote the introduction to "The Scene: Craft in Atlanta," the latest edition of our series exploring craft in American cities. **page 42**.

Covering Hawai'i since 1998—including her article in this issue on kapa, a Hawaiian bark cloth—**Catharine Lo Griffin** was an editor at *Honolulu Weekly* and Washington bureau manager for *WIRED*. The founding editor of *Free Surf* magazine, she lives in Waialua on O'ahu's North Shore, where she coaches at Manu O Ke Kai Canoe Club and volunteers on the *Wānana Pāoa*, a sailing canoe encouraging community building through Indigenous education. **page 30**.

FROM TOP DOWN: Photo by Melissa Kelsey. Photo by Brooke Fitts. Photo by Joe Hart. Photo courtesy of Cinqué Hicks. Photo by Catharine Lo Griffin.



Letters from Readers

Recent Improvements

The magazine has been greatly improved in the last two years or so. The articles about various skillful craft people are fascinating to read, and the variety of beautiful crafts is astonishing.

—Lorri Evans, Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota

Notes on Neon

The article about the neon renaissance and the women who are at the forefront ("A Neon Renaissance") was fascinating and inspiring. While the article listed four neon museums, all are primarily accessible to people who reside on the West Coast. I was disappointed that you didn't include other remarkable neon museums in the rest of the country, and specifically the American Sign Museum in Cincinnati. Its collection is historically and artistically delightful.

—Judith Harmony, Cincinnati, Ohio

Corrections to "A Neon Renaissance" (Spring 2025): Victoria Ahmadizadeh Melendez contributed three words—*Always*, *Fear*, and *Maybe*—not two, to *You Are Here*, a neon work created with Christen Baker. Baker contributed the words *Then*, *Now*, and *Attention*, which is bright red, not yellow.

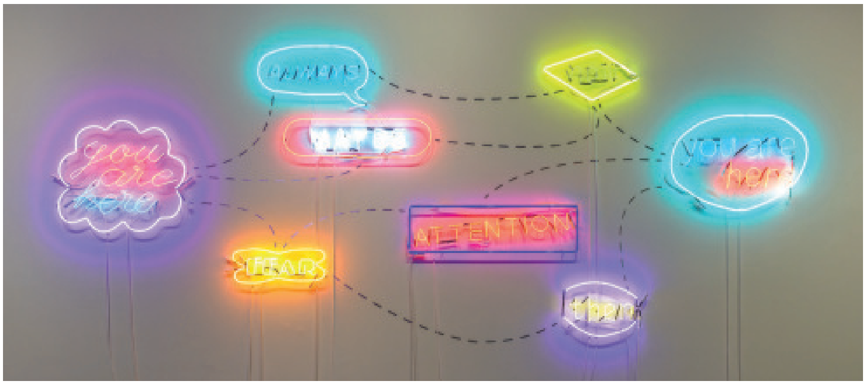


Photo courtesy of Ekaterina Izmestieva.

Craft Lab
Workshop Series

Illuminate the Business of Making.

From engaging conversations with craft world movers and shakers to practical skill-building sessions, this free, members-only series is thoughtfully designed for artists at every stage of their career.

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Join us June 10 for our next workshop, **Contracts, Agreements, and Licensing for Artists.**

High Desert Workshop

A silversmith takes us inside the outbuilding where she makes bits, spurs, and jewelry in southwestern Wyoming.

BY AMY ERICKSON

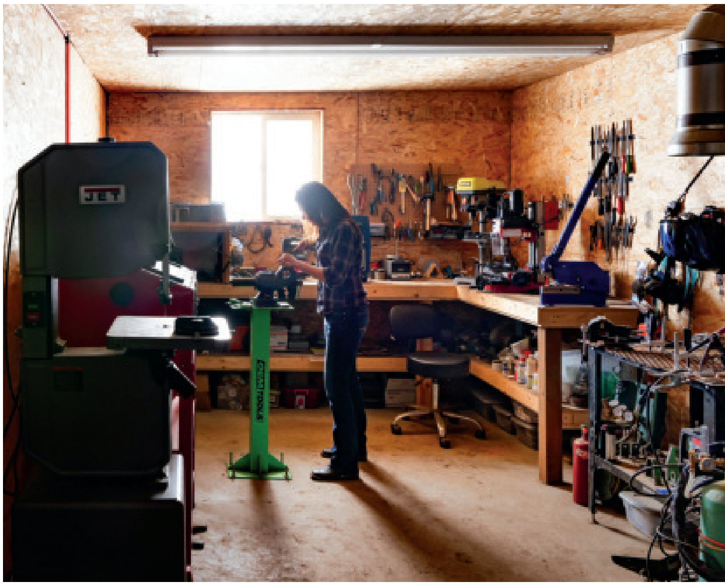
As a Western silversmith and bit and spur maker, I make equipment and gear that aims to define the spirit of the American West and tell stories of heritage, craftsmanship, and function. When I'm in my workshop—which is part of a larger shop on our property in southwestern Wyoming—I am immersed in a craft that blends artistry with utility. I believe that every piece I create carries the weight of history and the promise of enduring quality.

My shop was born out of necessity. As my work grew, I realized I needed a dedicated space separate from my existing leather shop to accommodate the unique needs of my silversmithing and bit and spur making. My husband helped me carefully plan and expand the space. We did all the work ourselves. The result is a simple, rustic, and utilitarian space with tools and equipment taking center stage.

Here, the art of silversmithing and bit and spur making comes to life through a blend of traditional and modern tools. Every piece I create begins with a drawing—a blueprint that captures my vision and guides the entire process. Whether I'm designing a custom bit, spur, Western jewelry, or a belt buckle, the drawing serves as the foundation for every step that follows. It's where the creative process starts, translating an idea into a tangible plan.

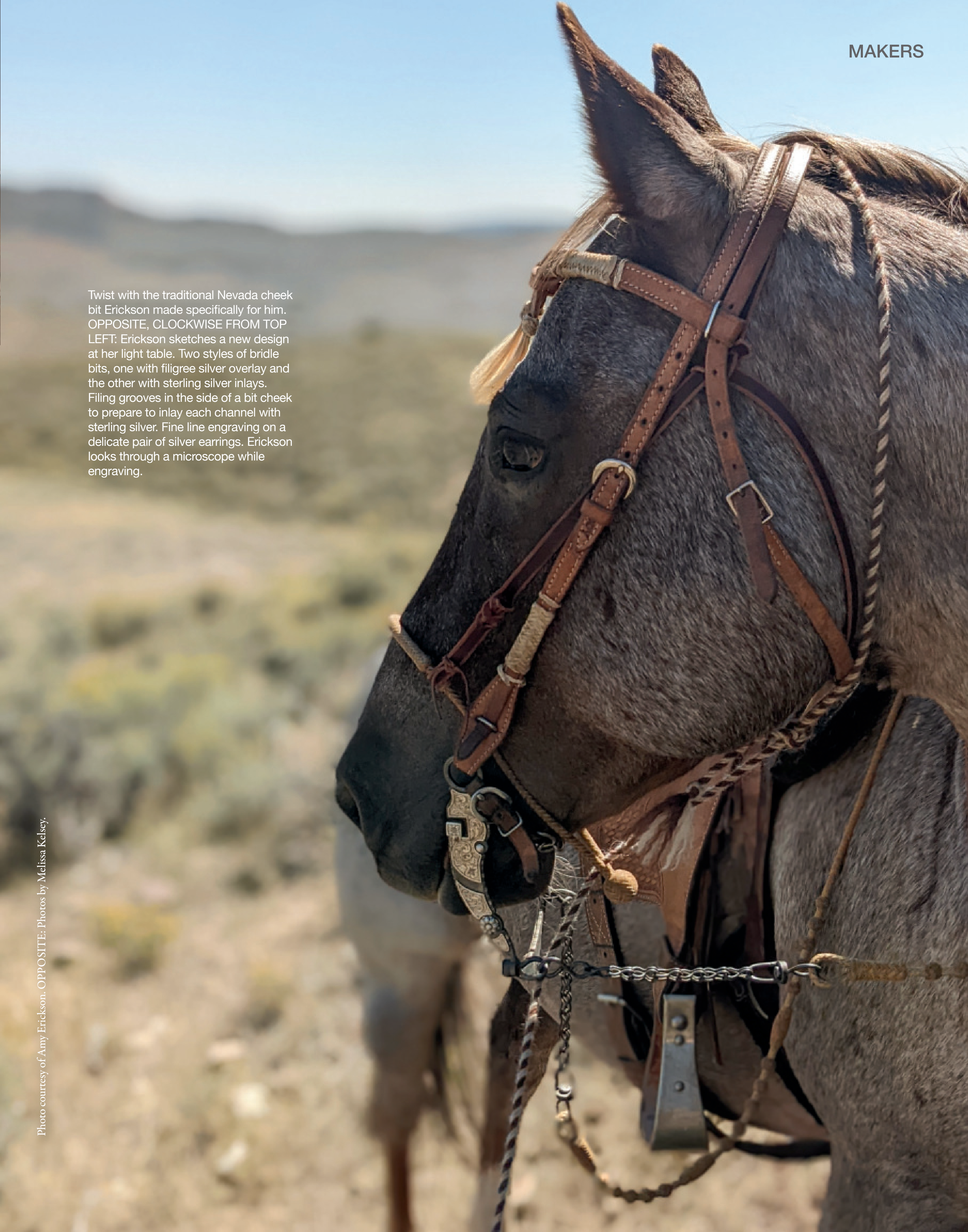
Next I start to work with the raw materials—high-quality metals ready to be transformed. I employ time-honored tools such as hammers, chisels, and hand files to carefully shape and carve every element. I take pride in the precision of my handwork, whether I am engraving intricate designs or removing material bit by bit to reveal the finished piece. While traditional methods guide much of my work, I also make use of modern machinery like a band saw to cut out the rough shapes for bits and spurs and weld them together.

I use a pneumatic handpiece for engraving, which is where my designs truly come to life. My goal is to create intricate patterns and details that reflect the Western spirit, ensuring that each line, flower, scroll, and leaf tells a unique story. Whether it's a bold, custom design on a



OPPOSITE: Amy Erickson with two of her horses, Peyote and Twist, and a bridle she created. RIGHT TOP: Erickson walks along a juniper ridge toward her shop with dogs Whip and Zoey. RIGHT: Inside her shop, Erickson works at a vise.

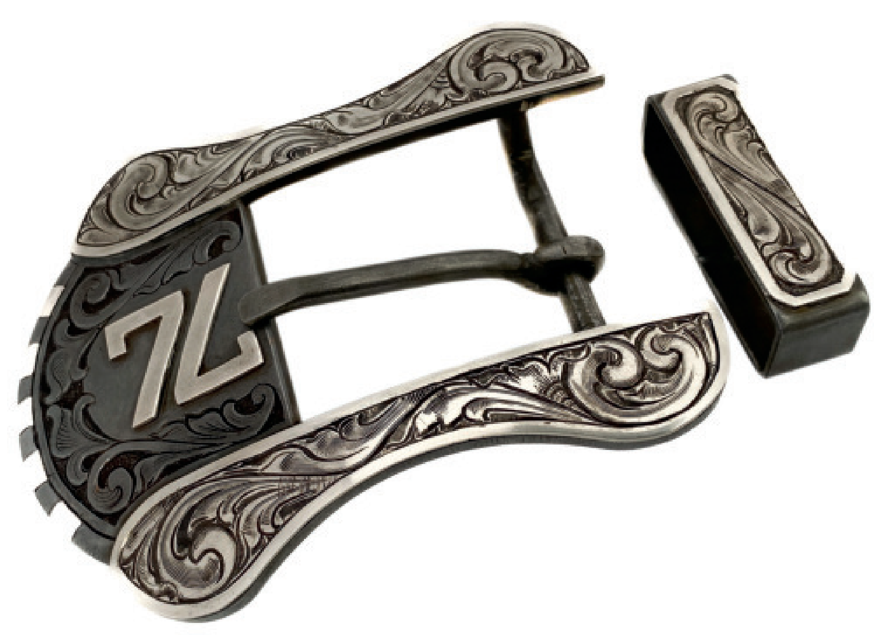
Photos by Melissa Kelsey.



Twist with the traditional Nevada cheek bit Erickson made specifically for him. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Erickson sketches a new design at her light table. Two styles of bridle bits, one with filigree silver overlay and the other with sterling silver inlays. Filing grooves in the side of a bit cheek to prepare to inlay each channel with sterling silver. Fine line engraving on a delicate pair of silver earrings. Erickson looks through a microscope while engraving.

Photo courtesy of Amy Erickson. OPPOSITE: Photos by Melissa Kelsey.

RIGHT: This 2023 custom belt buckle, with sterling silver overlays, includes the customer's brand. BELOW: Engraved bracelets made in 2024. OPPOSITE TOP: Erickson made these spurs, a traditional California style, with multiple silver inlays that have been engraved. BOTTOM LEFT: A sterling silver engraved flower ring with a pink tourmaline stone. BOTTOM RIGHT: Erickson created her 2024 sterling silver *Teton Mountains* line for Native Jackson Hole Gallery.



spur or a delicate floral motif on a belt buckle, the engraving is what gives the piece its character. These tools allow me to work with efficiency without sacrificing the craftsmanship at the heart of my process.

I've found that it's the relationship between the tools and my surroundings that shapes the rhythm of my day-to-day life. Every sound in the shop—the hum of the band saw, the tap of my hammer, the whir of my engraving handpiece—blends together like music, creating a natural harmony. The slower pace in my rural setting offers peace and solitude, which allows for deeper reflection and time to think, experiment, and connect with my work.

For inspiration I look to the beautiful scenery of the Wyoming high desert, through books and catalogs of old-time bits and spurs, and at the pieces I have from modern makers and my mentors. I feel a strong sense of belonging here, with my horses grazing nearby in the pasture and my dogs regularly coming in and out of the shop at their leisure for visits. In this space I feel grounded, both in the craft and in the legacy I am preserving.

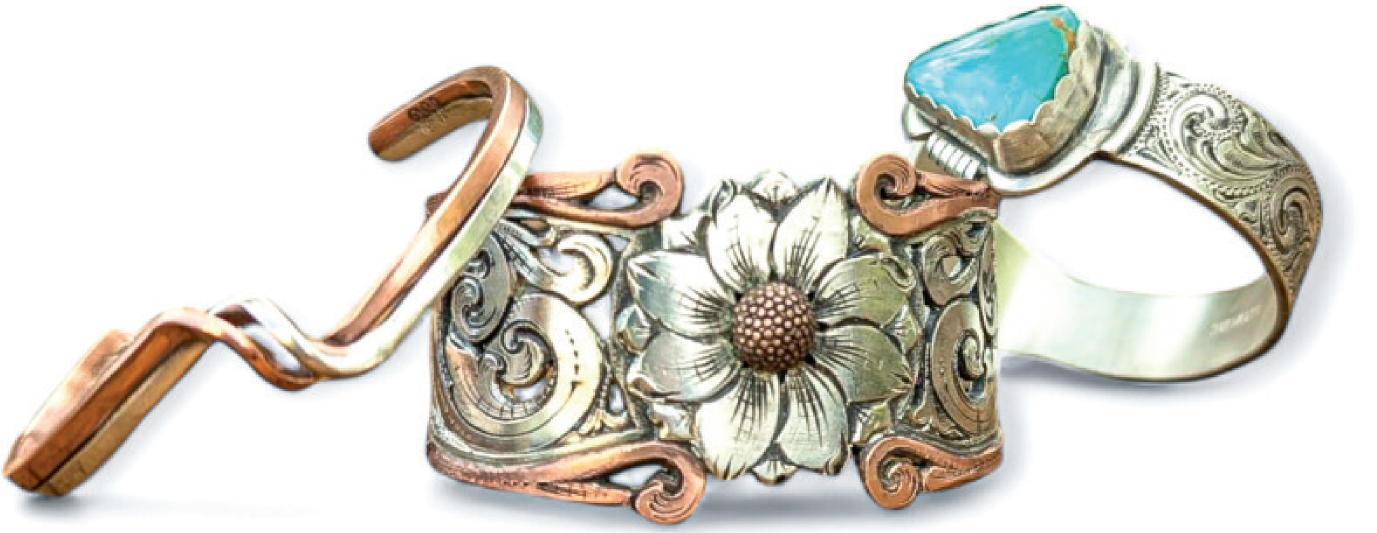
In other words, my workshop is more than a place of work—it is a sanctuary where art and history merge with the quiet, enduring beauty of the land. My work is about more than just making beautiful pieces—it's a deep connection to my own life growing up on my family's ranch. And each piece I create is more than a functional object—it is a reflection of the very life I have lived, shaped by the West and the experiences I've had in the saddle.

Bridging past and present, blending heritage with personal history, I want to contribute to ensuring that the legacy of my craft and this way of life continues for generations to come.

◆

ericksonbitandspur.com | @erickson_bit_and_spur

Amy Erickson runs her business, Erickson Bit and Spur, from her family ranch near Evanston, Wyoming. She received the 2020 Art of the Cowgirl bit making fellowship and was mentored by John Mincer/Mincer Silversmiths; a 2022 Wyoming Arts Council folk art mentorship grant, allowing her to study bit and spur making with Ernie Marsh; and a 2024–25 fellowship from the Cowgirl Artists of America. Her work is available at Native Jackson Hole Gallery in Jackson, Wyoming.

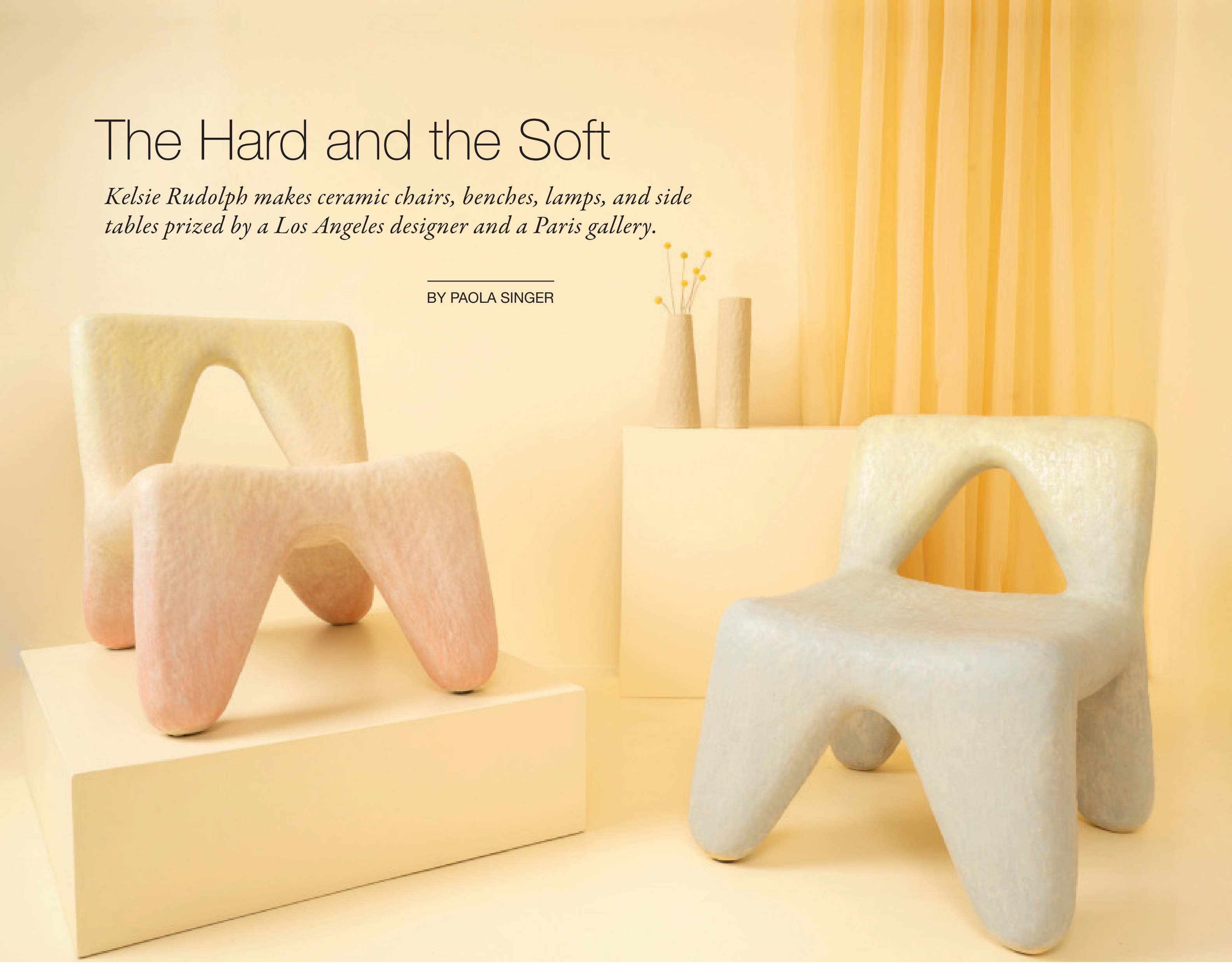


TOP: Photo courtesy of Brad Erickson. OPPOSITE TOP: Photo by Melissa Kelsey. All other photos courtesy of Amy Erickson.

The Hard and the Soft

Kelsie Rudolph makes ceramic chairs, benches, lamps, and side tables prized by a Los Angeles designer and a Paris gallery.

BY PAOLA SINGER



Helena, the capital of Montana, isn't exactly the place you'd expect to find a young artist making a name for herself in Los Angeles and Paris, but the tucked-away city suits ceramist Kelsie Rudolph just fine. "It's a tiny town and it's in the middle of nowhere, but it's also so affordable for me to do what I need to do," she says. "I really have a nice setup."

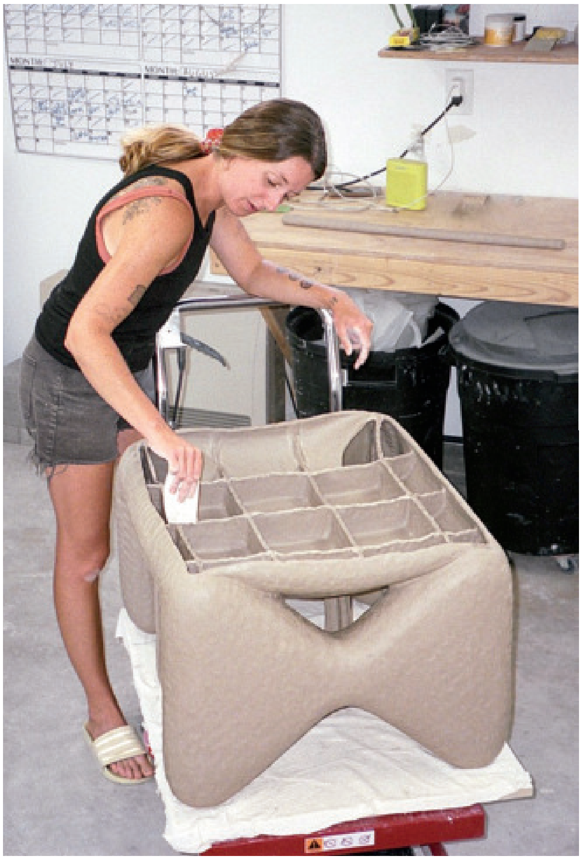
After an extended residency at the Archie Bray Foundation, a prestigious local program for ceramic artists, Rudolph decided to rent a nearby home. It has a garage-turned-studio that comfortably fits her sizable top-loading kiln, which she uses to make ceramic chairs, benches, lamps, and side tables; some have defined angles and curves, others are more fluid.

The maker's fusion of furniture design and ceramic art came naturally. Early in Rudolph's creative explorations as an art student at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, she was focused on making furniture out of wood. After taking a ceramics class, though, she immediately "turned into a clay person."

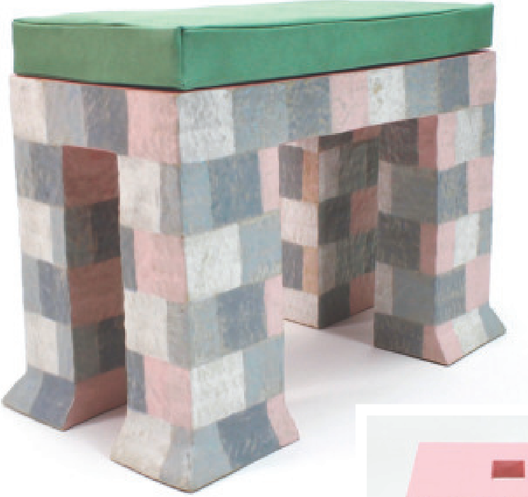
After completing an MFA in 2018, Rudolph began to think more seriously about architecture and interior spaces, and ways to turn clay into larger functional objects. She traveled to South Korea and spent six months apprenticing with Hun Chung Lee, a master of the craft. Back in the States, she designed a set of rectangular clay stools that made her feel as though she'd found her groove. The legs flare out slightly at the bottom, and the center of the seat features a small square orifice, used to slide in custom vinyl cushions that look like parts of a Tetris puzzle. "The furniture has just evolved since then," she says. "I have this very minimalistic approach to line and dimension."

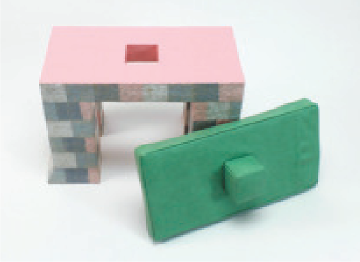
The work has caught the eye of boldface names like American designer Kelly Wearstler, who commissioned a

Photo by Will Warasila.

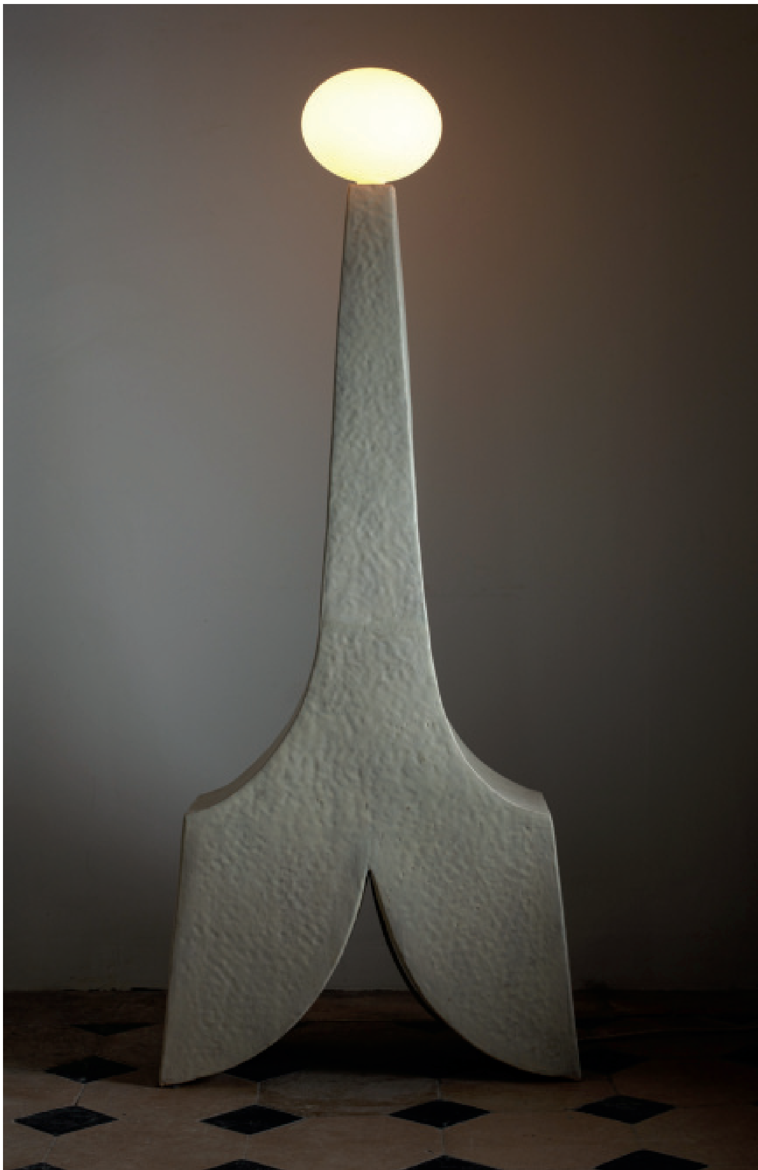


ABOVE: Kelsie Rudolph in her Helena ceramics studio. OPPOSITE: A faded lounge chair (left), 26 x 22 x 28 in., and faded chair (right), 28 x 22 x 25 in., from the *Softened* collection, 2023.





ABOVE and RIGHT: *Perch in Pink*, 2018, 18 x 24 x 13 in. BELOW: A 2024 lamp from the *Pierre* collection, made for Galerie Lefebvre & Fils in Paris.



series of benches from Rudolph for a project: oval pieces with rows of square legs, their thumb-textured surface (she pinches the clay endlessly as she's working) glazed in beige and ivory tones. Over the past few years, Rudolph has taken different approaches to color, often reflecting her emotions, from bright pastels applied in checkered patterns to barely there neutrals.

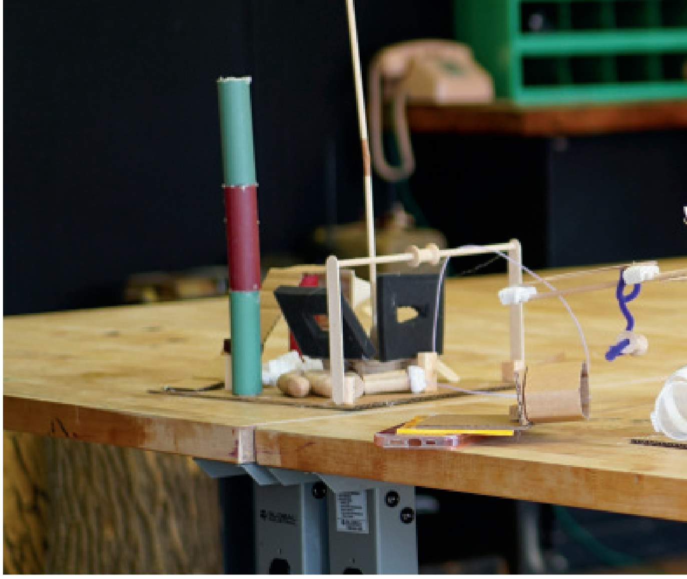
The artist's shapes have shifted too. Her latest collection, made exclusively for Galerie Lefebvre & Fils in Paris, consists of chairs, lamps, and stools with forms that look geometric but not strictly so. "I gave everything a swoopy leg," she says. "I finally found the sweet spot between the hard and the soft."

◆

kelsierudolph.com | @kelsie.rudolph

Paola Singer, a freelance writer in New York City, is a frequent contributor to *American Craft*.

TOP LEFT: Photo by Clara DeWeese. TOP RIGHT and INSET: Photos by Kelsie Rudolph. BOTTOM RIGHT: Photo by Anthony Girardi.



Where Kids Make

The founders of Craftsman & Apprentice designed a safe workshop space for kids to create, collaborate, and build confidence.

BY TIFFANY NIESLANIK

Craftsman & Apprentice, a cozy shop nestled in a community-driven neighborhood in Denver, Colorado, is a haven for creativity. Founded by former art teacher Delanie Holton-Fessler and Jonathan Fessler, a masonry business owner, the space is inspired by the apprenticeship model. "The goal was to create a safe space for kids to learn to use their hands and creativity to manipulate their world," Holton-Fessler says.

Having a safe space transcends just following the rules. At C&A, it emerges from a culture of respect and shared responsibility. Young makers are treated as capable members of a community and are expected to look out for one another while navigating a collective space. Holton-Fessler believes the resulting sense of belonging is integral to fostering creativity. "Self-trust comes from play, experimentation, and learning how to fail," she says. "We teach practical skills like sewing or tool use, which build confidence. But it all comes back to finding self-trust through play and being part of something bigger."

The workshop's build-and-play concept uses low-risk materials, such as cardboard and fabric scraps. With these sorts of easily replaceable materials, young people have the freedom to make mistakes as they work on dynamic projects that include everything from tabletop pinball games to sock stuffies. Most importantly, the goal isn't perfection; it's celebrating the joy of making something uniquely yours. "That moment when a child realizes their creation doesn't have to look like anyone else's is pure magic," Holton-Fessler says. "It's a reminder that individuality is something to celebrate."

Many kids return repeatedly to the programs. "It's really fun!" says a 12-year-old who has attended since she was 5. "They let you advance to different levels based on your skill, so what you learn is always different." During her time at C&A, she has created a treasure chest, a unicorn-themed board game, and a chair she still sits in. This kind of progression is the goal for Holton-Fessler. "We ultimately like to bring the apprentice idea full circle by letting kids volunteer as interns when they age out of the traditional programs," she says. "Then they inspire the next generation of makers."

◆

craftsmanandapprentice.com | @craftsmanandapprentice

Tiffany Nieslanik is a Denver-based writer whose work has appeared in publications including *National Geographic* and *Business Insider*.

Photos by Brynn Jaouen-Starr.

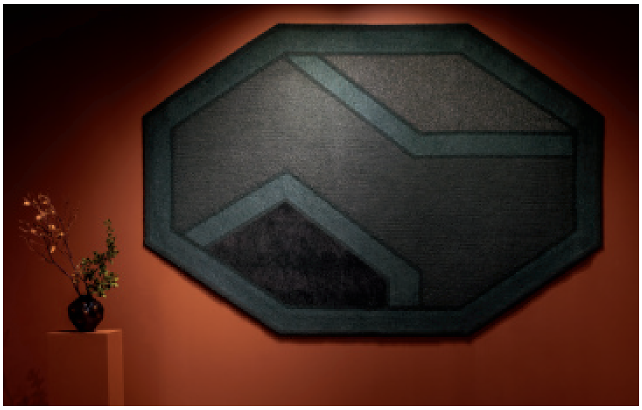
> **“That moment when a child realizes their creation doesn’t have to look like anyone else’s is pure magic.”** —Delanie Holton-Fessler

TOP: Works in progress by kids at Craftsman & Apprentice. ABOVE: A teacher observes a student in action. OPPOSITE MIDDLE: Another student works on a simple machine challenge. BOTTOM: Honey bears filled with paint populate a supply shelf.

A Slow, Sustainable Yarn

The creative team at Merida abandoned manufacturing to create small-batch, handmade rugs that embody artistic ambition.

BELOW: In the Design Miami 2024 Curio program exhibition, Sylvie Johnson's *Glaze*, 2024, wool, mohair, and alpaca merino yarns, 72 x 108 x .75 in. BOTTOM LEFT: Johnson's *Drift*, 2023, wool, linen, and alpaca merino yarns, 108 x 72 x .75 in. BOTTOM RIGHT: Artist-in-residence Johnson in Merida's studio workshop.



When Catherine Connolly, owner and CEO of Merida, reminisces about the journey she and her team of 25 have taken since the former marketing executive came to the textile company 17 years ago, she routinely repeats a phrase from Robert Frost's seminal poem, "The Road Not Taken":

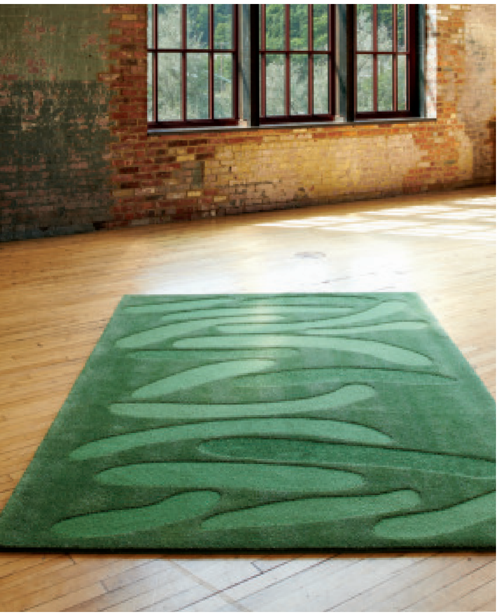
. . . way leads on to way . . .

The 47-year-old company was founded in Syracuse, New York, and in the mid-nineties relocated to Fall River, Massachusetts, which Connolly says had been "the cradle of textiles" in the 1850s. When she arrived, however, the skills of Merida's three generations of local artisans were being underutilized. "It was a volume business," Connolly explains. "We sold through carpet dealers and stores like Restoration Hardware. We cared deeply about how things were made, where our fibers came from, and being sustainable. But when you care about those sorts of things, it's hard to compete in the world of manufacturing."

Early on in Connolly's tenure, Merida shifted to small-batch production, emphasizing the handmade to create bespoke rugs for designers and architects. Yet, while the work was well received, all Connolly could think about was how to give her employees even more opportunity to grow. "I knew we had to do something so original and so extraordinary that people would be willing to pay for what it actually cost to make. I'm not sure I knew what 'extraordinary' even meant, but I knew we weren't quite there."

Then way led on to way. A friend introduced Connolly to Sylvie Johnson, a Paris-based artist and weaver known for using color and material composition to manipulate light and shadow. The connection was immediate. "Somehow our intentions meshed," says Connolly. "We wanted to do something memorable."

Johnson became Merida's artist-in-residence in 2017, and each year since, she and the Merida team have created the *Atelier* series, which features 36 individually designed rugs. In 2024, three of Johnson's pieces were featured at Design Miami. "In textiles, you need the weave, the fibers, and the technique, too, to create something that is alive," Johnson says.



What's most gratifying to Connolly is that Johnson's intimate involvement has, far from alienating a creative staff, engendered a deeply collaborative environment. "When she came, all the walls came down. Everyone bought into the idea that, even though Sylvie comes to the table with a vision, it won't be realized without our own designers and craftspeople bringing their all to the table. It's an iterative process.

"For example, a couple of years ago, we decided to introduce embroidery. And we couldn't do that until our team practiced the necessary handwork for years. *Years*. And that's how it's all come together. We all routinely challenge ourselves to explore—different looms, multiple layers, multiple patterns—and, in slowing *way* down to learn and explore, way leads to way." —David Schimke

◆

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TOP: Photo by Kris Tamburello. BOTTOM: Photos by Richard Powers.

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CRAFT HAPPENINGS

Louis C. Tiffany and Meta K. Overbeck designed *Favrile Beetle Necklace*, on display in *Brilliant Color* at the Corning Museum of Glass.

Photo courtesy of Corning Museum of Glass.

MAY OPENINGS

Brilliant Color
Corning Museum of Glass
Corning, New York
May 10, 2025–January 11, 2026

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, glass underwent what the organizers of this exhibition call a "chromatic revolution" as designers, many trained as chemists, experimented with new color techniques. Vibrantly hued everyday items and art glass alike will be on display, including products from Lalique and Tiffany and contemporary works by artists who innovate in color.

Familiar Texture: The Fibers of Childhood and Home
John Michael Kohler Arts Center
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
May 10, 2025–April 5, 2026

The textiles and fiber works on display here, by Farah Al Qasimi, Hangama Amiri, Keith Jackson, Yvette Mayorga, Tressa Prisbrey, and Dalila Sanabria, will present childhood memories of home. Each work depicts an evocative interior space: living rooms, bedrooms, storage spaces. "Each of these sites," write the organizers, "memorialize social and environmental influences that shaped the future of an individual."

Night Circus
Cary Graphic Arts Collection
RIT Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York
May 15–August 8, 2025

The 30-some artists in the Guild of Book Workers' biennial juried exhibition were all tasked with interpreting the theme "Night Circus," guided by a set of phrases including "curiosity of the Spectacle," "investigating Clandestine action and Secret knowledge," and "embracing Chaos and Otherness." The resulting works will include fine and design bindings, printing, book arts, and calligraphy imbued with mystery.

Layered Narratives: Quilted Stories of Gender and Race at the 1876 Centennial

Mingei International Museum
San Diego, California
May 17–November 16, 2025

The celebration of the centennial of American independence in Philadelphia viewed the nation in profoundly Eurocentric and patriarchal terms. "This exhibition," write the organizers, "focuses on the absent voices and unheard stories found at this centennial." The quilts shown here, sourced from the 1876 event, reflect women's involvement in politics and the exclusion of Black Americans from the celebration.

Clifford Ward: I'll Make Me A World

Grounds For Sculpture
Hamilton, New Jersey
May 18, 2025–January 11, 2026

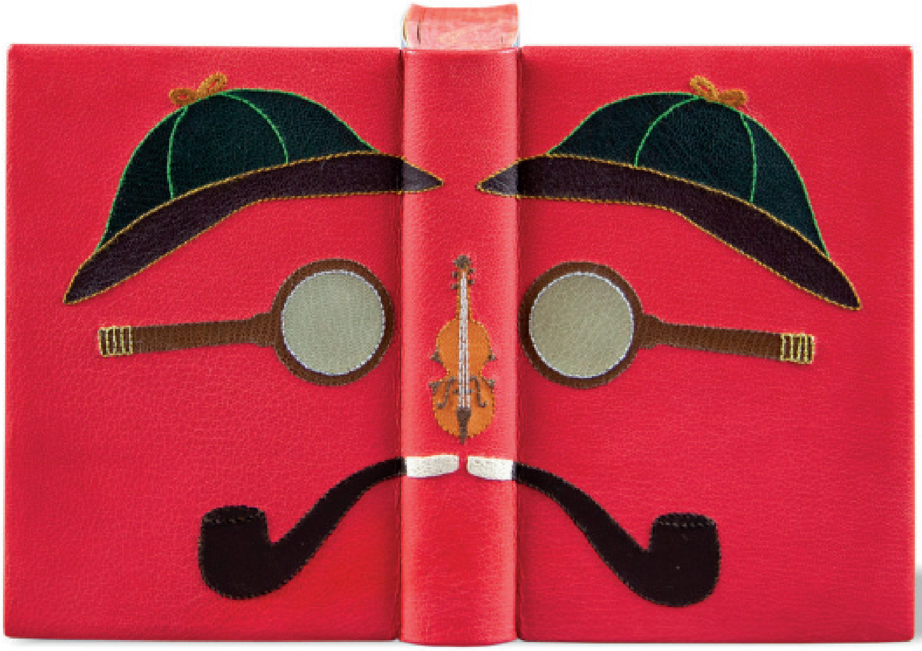
The totemic figures in this solo exhibition are crafted by wrapping plaster bandages around an armature and adding details with steel, cardboard, Styrofoam, and other materials. These works, spanning the past decade, reflect the artist's influences—ranging from global art traditions to cubism and geometry—and situate Ward within the utopian, speculative, and liberatory tradition of Afrofuturism.

Making in Between: Indigenous Americans

American Museum of Ceramic Art
Pomona, California
May 24–November 30, 2025

This will be the final exhibition in AMOCA's *Making in Between* series, which brings together works by artists exploring identity, culture, and community. On display will be pieces by four prominent Native artists: Mercedes Dorame, Anita Fields, Courtney M. Leonard, and Cannupa Hanska Luger. Organizers promise to "complicate viewers' expectations of what constitutes contemporary Indigenous art."

TOP: Photo by Jeanne Goodman, courtesy of the Guild of Book Workers. BOTTOM: Photo by Rebecca DeGroot.



ABOVE: Book artist and conservator Todd Pattison's leatherbound *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes* will appear in *Night Circus*. BELOW: Rebecca DeGroot—whose maple burl and resin *Mini Aquifers*, 2021–22, are pictured here—will demonstrate woodturning at AAW's June symposium.

JUNE OPENINGS

Nickola Pottinger: fos born

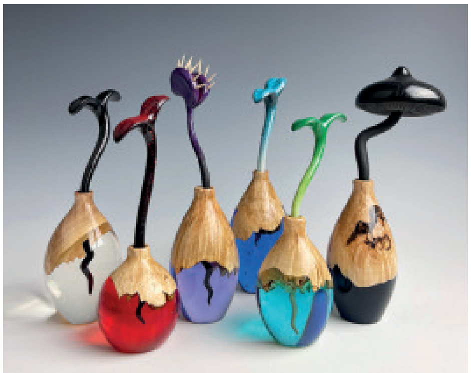
Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum
Ridgefield, Connecticut
June 8, 2025–January 11, 2026

Jamaica-born Pottinger creates "duppies" (Jamaican patois for "ghosts") out of paper pulp made from family documents and other found materials, then colors them and adds other shapes that can include casts of her own face and hands. A newly created set of these talismanic figures will be on display in this, her first solo museum show.

Women Working with Clay Symposium

Hollins University
Roanoke, Virginia
June 9–11, 2025

Curator, writer, and art historian Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy will be the keynote speaker at this gathering exploring and promoting work in clay by women—and, the organizers write, "whatever point of view may come with that distinction." Discussions, demonstrations, and the sharing of stories and artworks will all be aimed at inspiring and supporting women's creativity in clay.



AAW's 39th Annual Woodturning Symposium

RiverCentre
Saint Paul, Minnesota
June 12–15, 2025

Billed as "the biggest woodturning event in the world," the American Association of Woodturners' annual confab will feature demonstrations by important practitioners from around the globe; exhibitions and auctions of international wood art; and a trade show. The offerings will be presented in a dozen official categories, including Bowls and Platters, Sculpture, Hollow Forms, and Tools and Techniques.

Eventually Everything Connects: Mid-Century Modern Design in the US
Cranbrook Art Museum
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
June 14–September 21, 2025

Cranbrook played a key role in the evolution of design in the middle of the 20th century, and the school's contribution will be underlined in this show of some 200 exemplary works of furniture, textiles, and design from the museum's collection. There's a special emphasis on the women, LGBTQ people, and people of color among the 100 artists featured in this show and in an accompanying book of the same title, to be published by Phaidon in July.

Betsabée Romero:
Al reverso de la pista / On the Other Side of the Track
Blanton Museum of Art
Austin, Texas
June 14, 2025–January 4, 2026

Romero's installation will honor her multilayered Mexican heritage, fusing car culture, Catholicism, and Indigenous tradition. In an enclosed space evoking the sacred ball courts of ancient Mesoamerica, she pays homage to Mexico's autoworkers by mounting engraved and painted Nascar tires lined with brightly colored rebozo shawls and, at either end, car parts arranged to suggest the rose windows of a cathedral.

Summer Solstice and Wooden Boat Festival
North House Folk School
Grand Marais, Minnesota
June 20–22, 2025

This tradition-minded craft school on the North Shore of Lake Superior offers instruction not only in boatbuilding, but in making jewelry from pebbles, Newfoundland-style knitting, and much more. When the sun stands still in the sky this June, they'll welcome the public for three days of crafting, paddling, and community by the big lake.

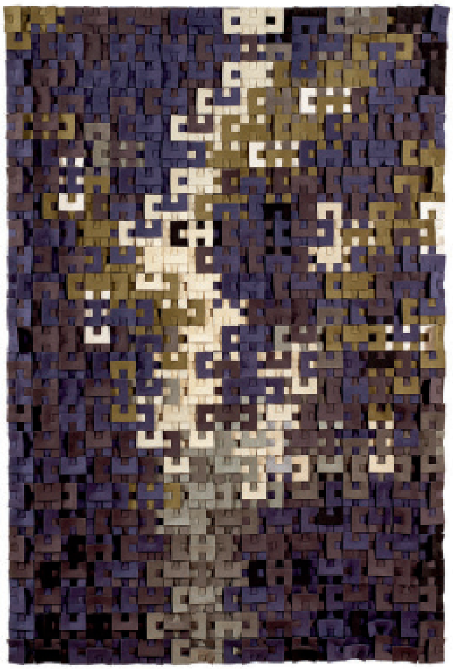
Fiberart International 2025
Contemporary Craft
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
June 20–August 30, 2025

The jury for this prestigious triennial exhibition, widely seen as a benchmark for fiber art trends worldwide, winnowed 400 entries from 30 countries down to works by 36 artists, both established and emerging. The emphasis is on innovation in traditional fiber materials and processes, as well as fresh connections between fiber and other artistic disciplines.

JULY OPENINGS

Resident Artist Shows: Kevin Snipes, Akiko Jackson, and Minah Kim
The Clay Studio
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
July 10–September 7, 2025

The artists on view here were chosen for The Clay Studio's eight-week residency. Snipes creates what he calls "multilayered paintings" by adding whimsical figure drawing and text to porcelain objects. Jackson's ceramic sculptures incorporate old clothing, fabric, hair, and other "dispensible" materials. And Kim's delicate-but-ragged openwork bowls and biomorphic sculptures are, she says, manifestations of "internalized memories."



RIGHT: Anja Isphording, who made this cast-glass vessel, will present at Pilchuck Glass School's Casting Conference. TOP RIGHT: Gayla Rosenfeld's synthetic suede *Olive Tree at Night*, 2024, will appear in *Fiberart International*.

Liz Collins: Motherlode
RISD Museum
Providence, Rhode Island
July 19, 2025–January 11, 2026

For three decades, queer feminist artist Collins has been creating fiber works that, as the organizers of this show write, "disrupt the boundaries between art, design, and craft" while "convey[ing] the textured complexities of power and intimacy." She's also worked in fashion, installation, sculpture, and performance, and these sides of her multifaceted career will also be on display.

AUGUST OPENINGS

Casting Conference
Pilchuck Glass School
Stanwood, Washington
August 22–24, 2025

This gathering, a follow-up to Pilchuck's 2023 Neon Symposium, will welcome artists, fabricators, and curators specializing in cast glass and *pâte de verre* to a program of lectures, demonstrations, collaborations, and panels. Topics will include casting in a kiln, hot casting, packing molds for pâte de verre, and bombarding cast glass with plasma.

Discover more Craft Happenings at craftcouncil.org/crafthappenings

TOP: Photo by Shay Ben Efraim. BOTTOM: Photo courtesy of Anja Isphording.

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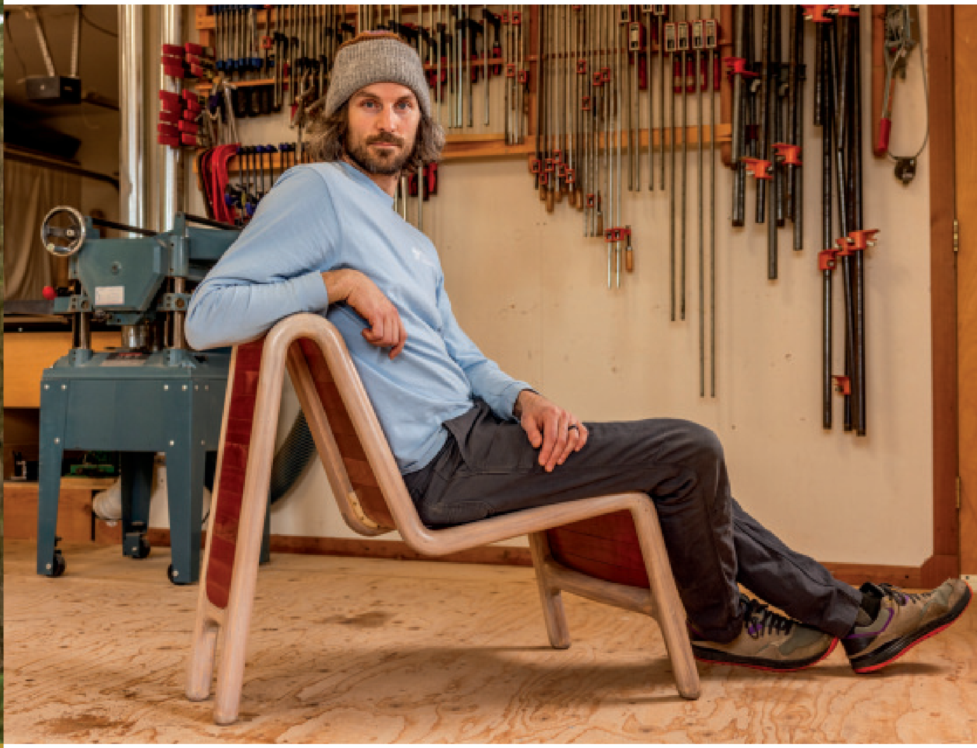


Washington sculptor and furniture maker Kevin Reiswig finds inspiration growing in his backyard.

BY LAUREN GALLOW

Kevin Reiswig walks to visit the Garry oaks he planted in Fort Worden State Park near his home in Port Townsend, Washington. TOP RIGHT: Reiswig sits in his *Linger Lounger*, made from reclaimed cherry and poplar.

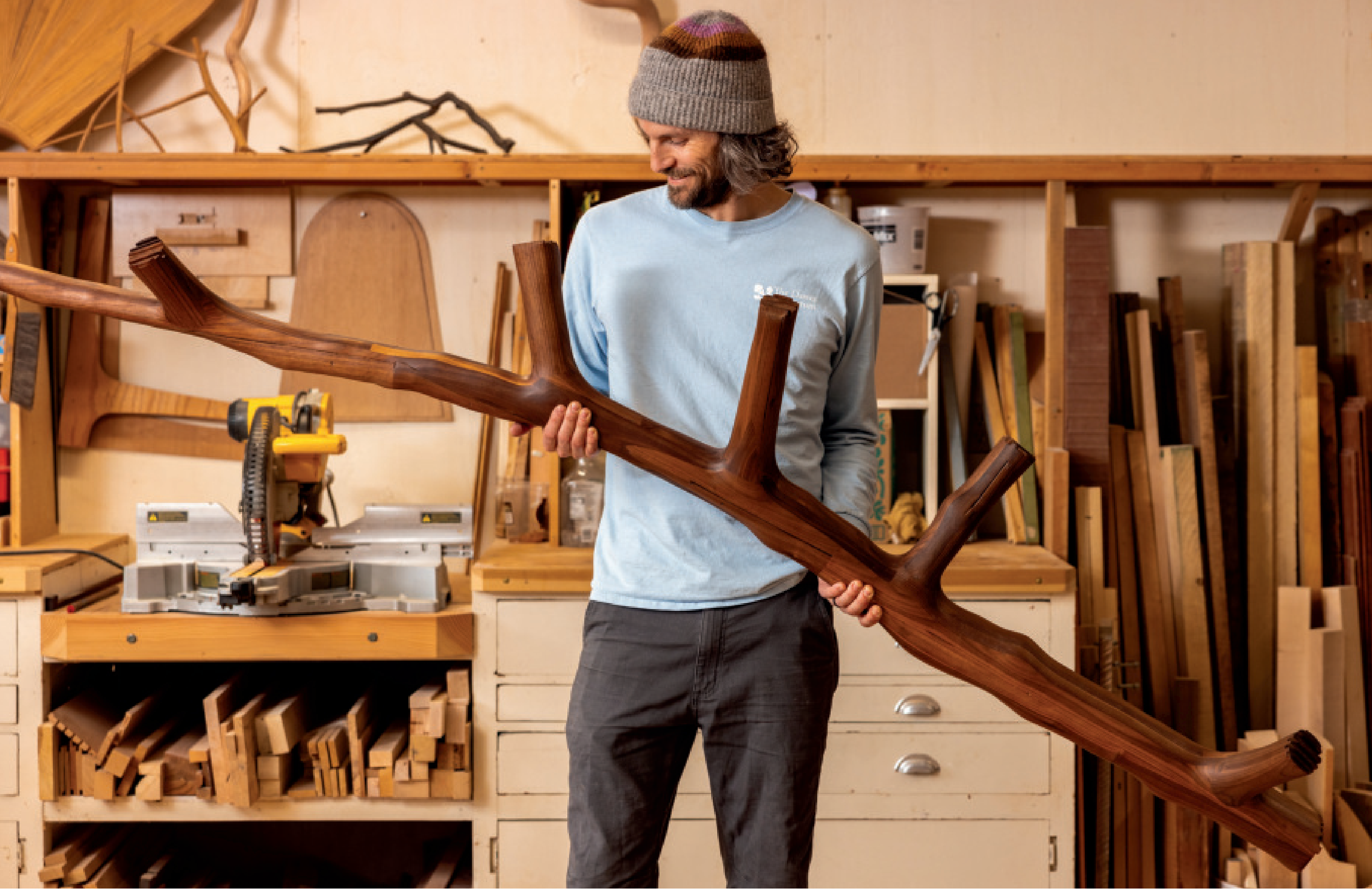
Photos by Reva Keller.

Recently, Kevin Reiswig told a story to a group of gallerygoers. They were gathered for an exhibition of his handmade wood sculptures, many of which resemble tree branches. "A tree stands in the forest," Reiswig began. "It started as a tiny sapling, and after hundreds of years and several human lifespans, the tree has grown to enormous size. In a few short minutes, the tree is cut down and loaded onto a truck to be brought to a nearby mill."

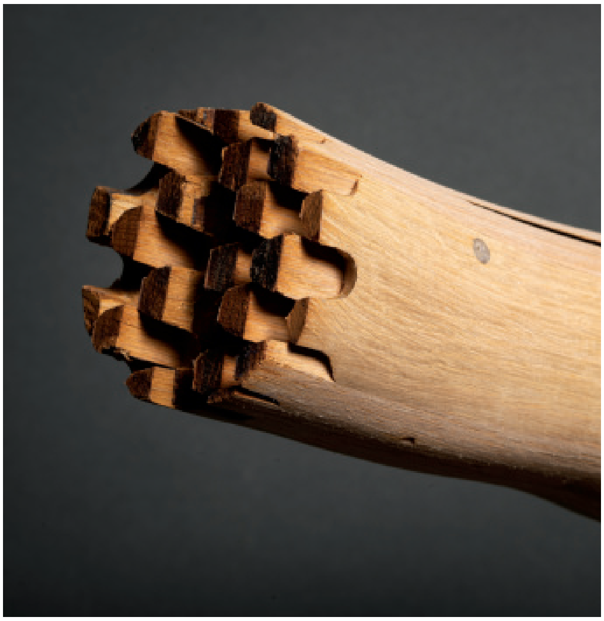
Just as Reiswig's story went on to trace the life cycle of this fictional tree and its journey into the built environment as lumber, the artist's work similarly conjures questions about the timescale of trees and the many ways humans intervene in nature. Ranging from his intricately assembled tree-branch sculptures to furniture of all kinds, Reiswig's work often incorporates reclaimed wood that he sources from his community in Port Townsend, Washington.

"Wood actually makes up a significant portion of our landfill waste every year," says Reiswig, gesturing to the neatly arranged slats of wood lining the walls of his studio. The building, a converted garage, sits adjacent to his 100-year-old home, overlooking a picturesque meadow and lagoon on the northern tip of the Olympic Peninsula. "If we thought more carefully about how we deconstruct buildings or furniture, we wouldn't have to take wood out of the forest as often."

This eye toward regeneration is the throughline of Reiswig's work, which began during his studies in sculpture at The College of Wooster



ABOVE: Reiswig transformed black walnut flooring that he salvaged from a dumpster into the branch sculpture *The Dining Room Floor*, 20 x 97 x 9 in. BELOW: This detail of another sculpture, *Desk Drawers*, 2022, shows how Reiswig layers and laminates wood, here salvaged beech and oak desk parts.

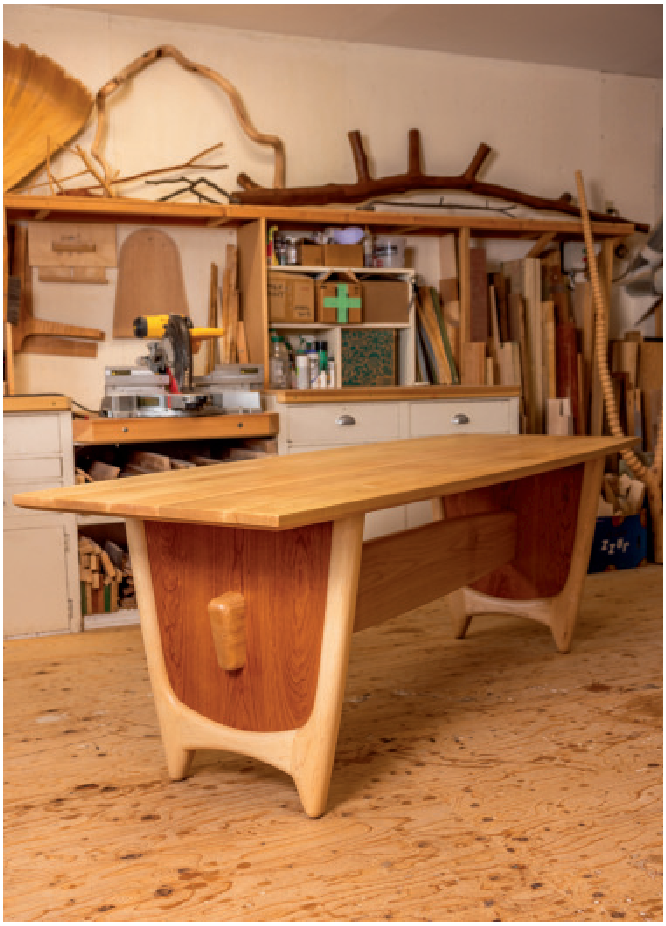


in Ohio and continued through his formative years in Chicago working as a fabrication assistant for artists such as Theaster Gates. "In Chicago, I learned how to work with reclaimed wood for everything from sculptures that ended up in museums, to furniture that ended up in houses, to architectural millwork," he says. "I realized that aspect of regeneration mirrored what happens in nature, and what was happening inside myself."

For Reiswig, this self-awareness has meant a keen attention to his impact on the natural world. Because the artist works exclusively with wood, he has cultivated a deep knowledge not only of different wood species, woodworking techniques, and forest management practices from his wood suppliers, but also of how trees grow and evolve. He regularly plants trees around his home and further afield on the Olympic Peninsula, and has experimented with grafting on the heritage fruit trees dotting his property.

This holistic knowledge takes full expression in his work, particularly in his series of sculptural tree branches that were recently on view at the Bainbridge Arts and Crafts gallery and now sit perched atop tables and shelves in his light-filled studio. "I took wood that was destined for the trash and turned it back into tree branches," he says of the works in the show, which were each made of salvaged wood. "I was really studying the forms of trees, trying to get my mind aligned with how trees grow."

BOTTOM: Photo by Artshots.biz. ALL OTHER IMAGES: Photos by Reva Keller.



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP: A client commissioned *Trestle Desk* in cherry and eastern maple; Reiswig designed it without drawers so it can be adapted into different uses. Reiswig uses a card scraper to shape a bowl made from salvaged oak barrel staves. *Revival*, made from discarded cedar, appeared in Reiswig's and Seth Rolland's show *TREEisms*, 109 x 26 x 10 in.

Expressed in various wood species, from dark red Pernambuco to a bluish yellow pine, and ranging in scale from delicate, spindly branches to human-height boughs, Reiswig's sculptures are formed using advanced woodworking techniques. He combines laminated assemblies with cut joinery and hand carving, often leaving the ends of the branches unfinished to reveal the joints. "I like to leave clues as to how they were made," he says.

Across form and scale, Reiswig uses his work to build awareness. Even with his furniture, the artist invites users to imagine how the pieces will live on into the distant future. In his studio, he is in the middle of constructing a table of maple and cherrywood, shaping the top on his workbench as the curved base sits nearby. A commission for a local woman who wanted a writing desk, the table is designed for multiple functions. "I designed it like a dining table because after she is gone, this piece of furniture will have many more options for use," says Reiswig. "A big part of my work is making things that will last many lifetimes."

When he's not in his studio, Reiswig can often be found in his backyard, which abuts a state park with miles of walking trails weaving through forest. Here, the artist proposed a project in 2022 to replant Garry oak trees, the region's only native oak species, which, after decades of logging, has become sparse. Working with the park and a crew of volunteers, Reiswig planted 30 saplings, which are now several feet tall. "Oaks are a keystone species," explains Reiswig as he tromps through meadow grasses to check on a few of the trees. "That means a lot of wildlife depends on them for food and habitat, so I've been trying to get more of them planted."

As we take the short walk through the forest back to his studio, Reiswig talks about other ways he engages with his community: volunteering with the North Olympic Salmon Coalition to restore habitat in riparian areas, showing his work at the town's annual fall Woodworkers Show, and teaching classes at the Port Townsend School of Woodworking. There, Reiswig most recently taught the capstone course in a nine-month intensive woodworking program. "The emphasis was on student-led designs and seeing the empowerment that comes from that," says Reiswig. "For me, that's the most liberating part of woodworking—being able to imagine something and then make it."

In this way, Reiswig's work has itself become a place of refuge for the artist, particularly in the way he has intertwined his conservation and education work with the thoughtful material sourcing and handcrafting that takes place in his studio. "It really feels like the edge of the world out here in Port Townsend, and being here has definitely given me space to think and create," Reiswig reflects as we round the bend back to his driveway. "My art has helped center my life around my own values, and inspire other people to connect to theirs."

◆

kevinreiswig.com | @kevin_reiswig

Lauren Gallow writes about design, art, and architecture from her home base in Seattle, with bylines in *The New York Times*, *Dwell*, and *The Art Newspaper*, among other publications. She also teaches writing classes for designers at the University of Washington.

Reiswig checks in on a young Garry oak that he planted in Fort Worden State Park. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Rocking Snail*, a children's rocking chair, is made from steam-bent white oak, 16 x 11 x 17 in. *Cascade Bookcase* is made of reclaimed sapele, fir, and alder and decorated with milk paint, 84 x 42 x 13 in. Reiswig was inspired by ideas of regeneration and global community to make *Coppice*, which includes ten wood species from around the world, 42 x 64 x 5 in. *Branch Stools* in (left to right) cherry, black walnut, and madrona, 24 x 16 x 16 in. each.

Photo by Reva Keller. OPPOSITE: Photos by Artshots.biz.

Beauty in the Bark

Until Western fabrics arrived in the late 1800s, kapa was one of the most refined art forms in Hawai'i. Modern makers are expanding on the tradition.

BY CATHARINE LO GRIFFIN

The first time Lehuauakea created kapa, they were 23 years old.

Their *kumu* (teacher), Wesley Sen, had invited the young Hawaiian to a workshop with students at Hālau Kū Māna charter school on Oʻahu. There they were introduced to *wauke* (paper mulberry), a plant that was brought to Hawaiʻi aboard ancient voyaging canoes so that Polynesian settlers could use its fiber for fabric. After the bark was stripped and the bast fermented in baths of salt water and fresh water, the students were tasked with pounding it into flat sheets. "I felt a little silly, because all these kids were 10 years younger than me, and they were doing it so much better than me," Lehuauakea remembers. "I was scrawny, my arms were like sticks, and I had no pounding strength at all. I could pound for a couple minutes and I'd get tired . . .

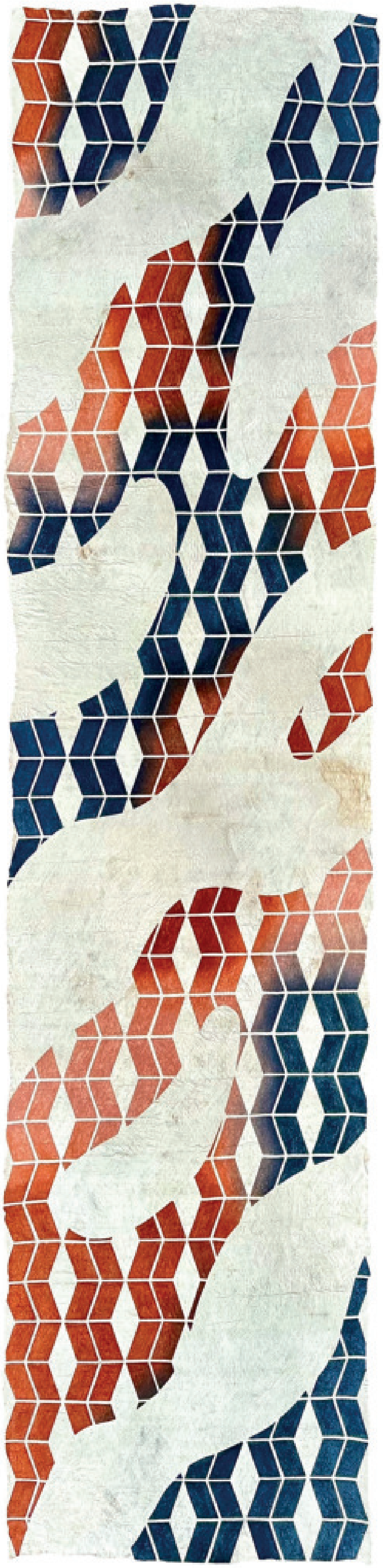
"But I barely slept the first night, because I was so excited to wake up the next morning and do it again."

Five years earlier, Lehuauakea's thesis at Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon, featured a wall installation with thousands of interwoven patterns that they'd stamped with hand-carved *ʻohe kāpala* (bamboo printing tools). Learning to pound kapa suddenly gave those designs a new life—a new place to land.

Maybe it was the syncopated tap-tap-tap of the wooden *hohoa* (mallets). Maybe it was the visible transformation of strips of fiber into pliable cloth. Maybe it was the awakening in Lehuauakea's genetic memory of a practice perfected by their ancestors. Whatever it was, they were hooked. "Especially after spending so much time on the continent, there was something in me that just felt right," says the Portland-born artist. "It felt like I'd come home to myself."

LEFT: Lehuauakea works on a large piece of kapa during a residency in Sante Fe. OPPOSITE: Dalani Tanahy's kapa bark cloth, *Califrisco*, 2018, 36 x 18 in.

Photo courtesy of Garret Vreeland / School of Advanced Research. OPPOSITE: Photo by Dalani Tanahy.



KOKESHI RICE
AA

LEFT and TOP: Photos courtesy of Lehuauakea. BOTTOM: Photo courtesy of Mario Gallucci.

Until Western fabrics arrived in the late 1800s, kapa was one of the most refined art forms in Hawaiʻi. Men made the necessary implements, including the four-sided *iʻe kuku* beaters that imprint a watermark on the cloth and the *kua lāʻau* (wooden anvil) upon which the cloth is beaten. Otherwise, the creation of kapa was solely the province of female makers.

While "commoners" on the islands typically wore plain, rough-hewn *malo* (loincloths) and *pāʻū* (skirts), kapa makers also produced more elaborate textiles and *kapa moe* (blankets) that were soft and supple, colored

OPPOSITE TOP: Lehuauakea stands in front of their Hawaiʻi Triennial installation, *Still Finding My Way Back Home*, 2025, 9 x 18 ft. OPPOSITE LEFT: Lehuauakea's *Kānehunamoku*, 2024, 72 x 18 in. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: A permanent installation, Lehuauakea's *Hoʻoulu Pū (Growing Together)*, 2024, 16 x 10 ft. RIGHT: Page Chang in her Honolulu-based Pūkoʻa Studios. BOTTOM LEFT and RIGHT: Chang's daughter Jasmine models kapa bracelets, earrings, a choker, and a pendant.

with natural plant dyes, and stamped with geometric designs. These were given as gifts or used in ceremonial rites, including births and burials. The finest kapa belonged to the *aliʻi* (chiefs), beaten so thin it was almost transparent—"clearer than the light of the moon," wrote Hawaiian historian Samuel Kamakau in 1870.

After that initial kapa making session, Sen went on to teach Lehuauakea in depth about each part of the process, from tending the baby wauke trees to harvesting, stripping, fermenting, pounding, dyeing, and stamping the bark.

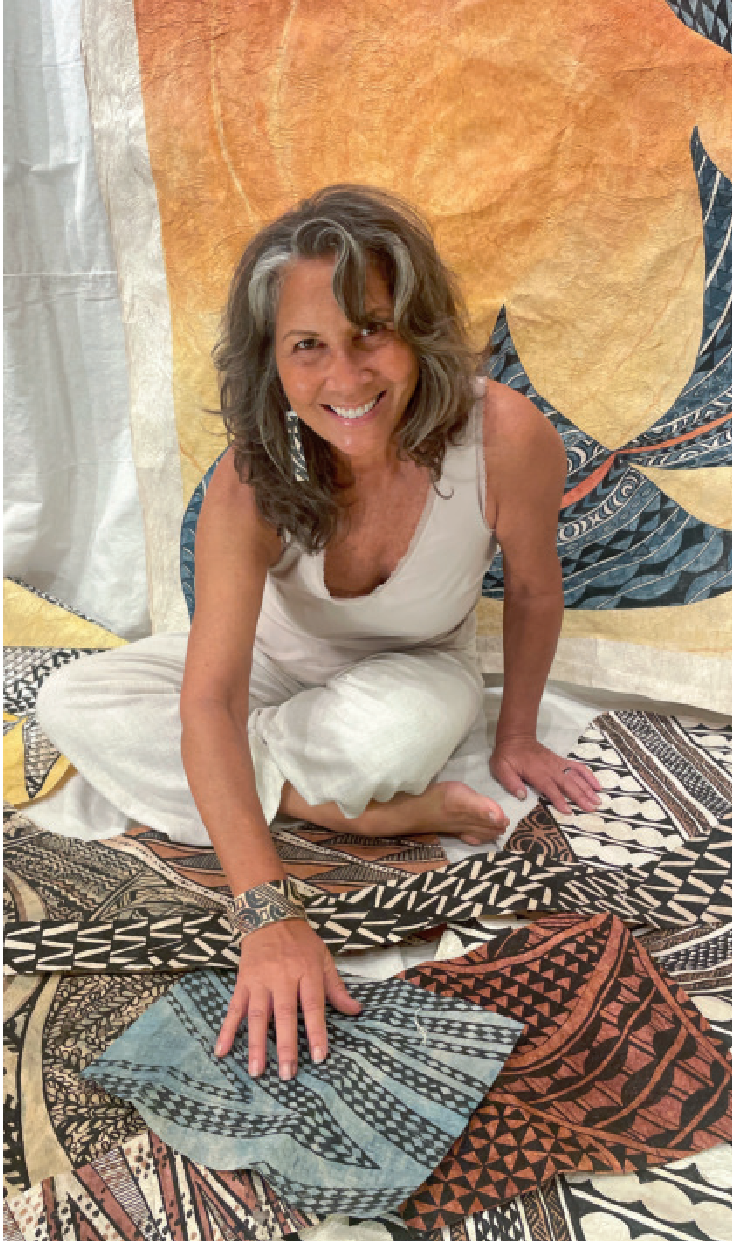
A student of master crafters such as Puanani Van Dorpe and Beatrice Krauss, Sen resurrected kapa making during the 1970s as part of the Hawaiian Renaissance. It was during this era that Hawaiian language, traditional arts, hula, and voyaging saw a resurgence and planted the seeds of decolonization. Today, all of Lehuauakea's kapa is founded on sustainable harvesting of traditional materials. Some of their pieces are objects of art for galleries; some, like kapa for cultural ceremonies, are utilitarian; and others, like their dramatic wearable pieces, fall somewhere in between. *Since the Beginning and End of Time* (2024), for example, is a hand-embroidered cloak of indigo-dyed kapa with bells and shell buttons.

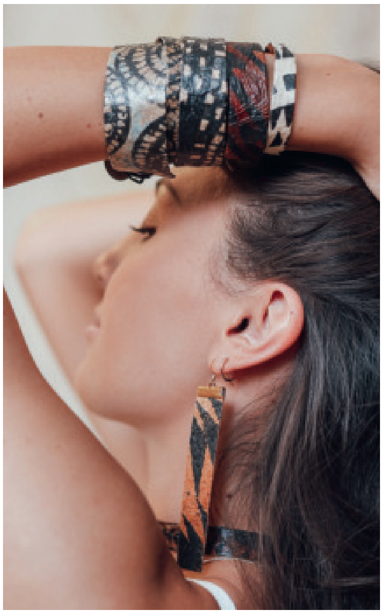
"It's important to not box ourselves in any more than we already are as contemporary Indigenous makers," Lehuauakea insists. "I don't have to copy the work of my ancestors. I don't have to make kapa that looks like it was made in the 1800s. There's a lot of skill in that, but that's not my voice."

Lehuauakea's work is influenced by their upbringing in Portland and Pāpaʻikou on Hawaiʻi Island, by the Japanese part of their heritage, by their Hawaiian education at Kamehameha Schools, and by relationships with other Indigenous artists on the US continent. "I'm only one part of a giant tree of different experiences as a modern Hawaiian, so the best I can do is express my own perspective as authentically as I can," says Lehuauakea, who now splits their time between Oʻahu and Santa Fe, New Mexico. At the same time, they acknowledge a pressure to carry out their work responsibly and respectfully. "That's what we're called on to do, especially when we're entrusted with knowledge that at one point wasn't accessible."

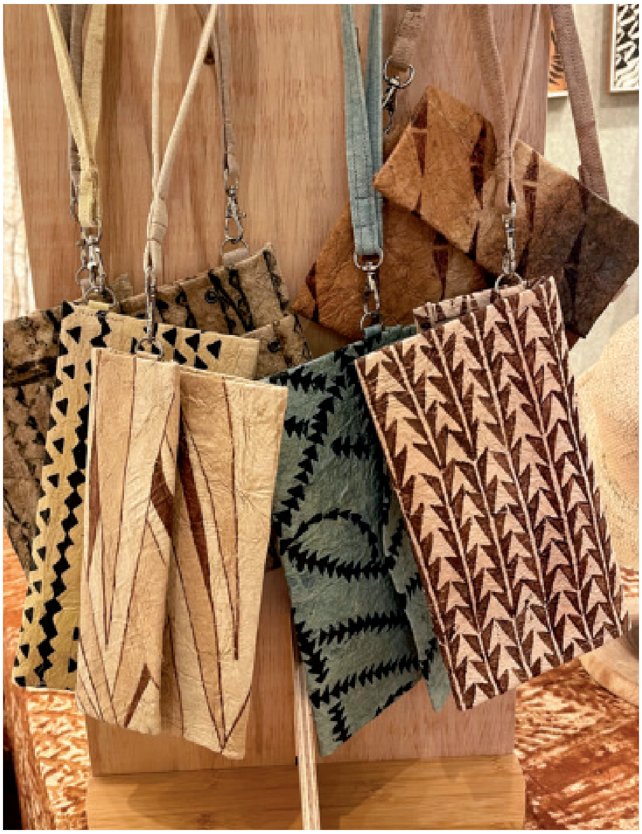
The Pacific's Finest Cloth

Perched on another branch of the modern Hawaiian kapa tree is Page Chang, who grew up in Washington, DC. Chang, whose background is primarily in painting and printmaking, moved to Hawaiʻi 31 years ago. She met her husband, Geoff, and they had two daughters—all three have had a hand in Chang's kapa venture.





TOP: Photo by Geoff Chang. BOTTOM LEFT and RIGHT: Photos by Nicole Naone.



TOP LEFT: Rolls of *ha'ana'ana* (inner bark of the *wauke* tree), which is ready for pounding. MIDDLE: Chang with a piece of freshly pounded bark (*mo'omo'o*), which is ready for fermentation. BOTTOM: Chang printing on kapa with a traditional stamp (*'ohe kāpala*) and ink made from the *kukui* nut tree. TOP RIGHT: Kapa purses, made by Chang, ready for market.

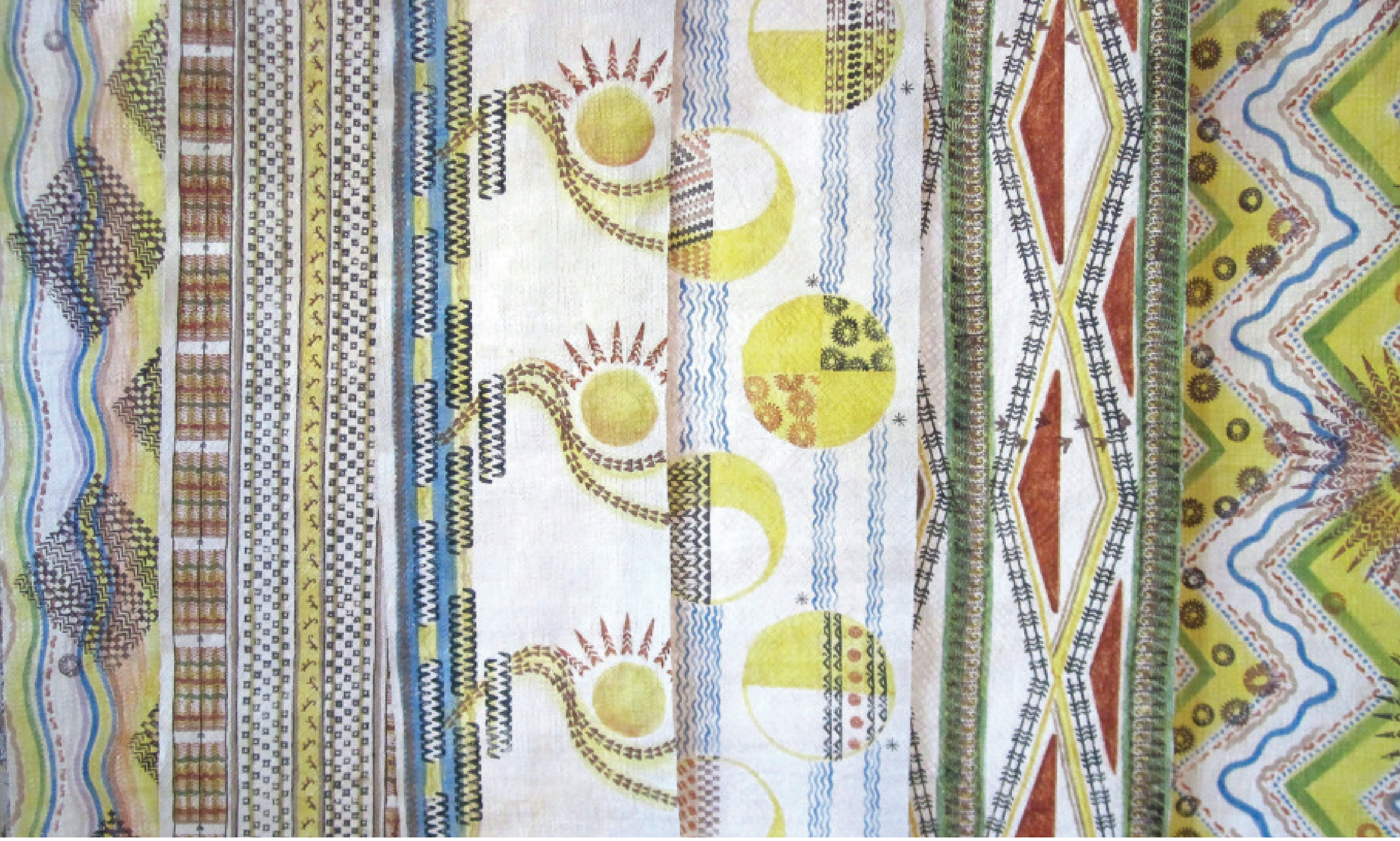
TOP LEFT and RIGHT: Photos by Page Chang. LEFT, MIDDLE and BOTTOM: Photos by Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement.

> “We want fast everything. But for me, it’s about the process.”
>
> —Page Chang

Chang’s Hawaiian father gave her the name Pūko‘a, which means “coral reef,” to encourage her continuous growth and creation. Chang’s mother was an avid gardener who taught her kids all about plants and their diverse characteristics. “We knew how to take care of the *‘āina* (land),” says Chang, whose love affair with kapa began by experimenting with dyes from barks and berries. Eventually she learned the fundamentals of the tradition from Dalani Tanahy, a kapa master on the west side of O‘ahu who was recently named a 2025 United States Artists Fellow.

Tanahy’s mission is to perpetuate Hawaiian kapa, foremost by reinforcing its identity as distinct from its cousins: Tahitian tapa, Samoan siapo, Tongan ngatu, and Fijian masi. Of all the bark cloth in the Pacific, Hawaiian kapa is regarded as the finest—soft to the touch and featuring watermarks, a diversity of color, and geometric patterns not found elsewhere.

“If you’re trying to become a practitioner, what we don’t call you is a ‘kapa artist,’ because it’s not just about painting this



thing," explains Tanahy. "If you are a kapa practitioner, you've experimented with the different plants that you read about. You'll understand why this way is better or this way is not."

Chang grows three kinds of wauke at her home in Waimānalo on Oʻahu, where she pounds, processes, and dyes all her kapa. The artist-owner of Pūkoʻa Studios, she is intent on being productive while also recognizing that the results are not instant. "We want convenience. We want fast fashion, fast everything. But for me, it's more about the process," she says, adding that kapa is a lifestyle. "It takes me a year to grow a tree. You have to work with the seasons. You have to plan ahead and think about it. It might take years to make kapa. During those years, what else is happening in your life?"

One of the pieces featured in Chang's 2024 exhibition at Sea Life Park on Oʻahu was a long, thin kapa banner that hung from the ceiling, depicting a female skin diver with long, flowing hair perched on the sea floor. "The pattern of the kapa itself came out so beautifully," says Chang, adding that both her daughters and her husband are divers. "I wanted to show that feeling of suspension on the kapa. I think of it as a curtain that is floating, rather than a stretched canvas that is nonmoving."

Both Chang and Lehuauakea are comfortable letting the tradition evolve with time and awareness. "We're only limited by our own beliefs," says Lehuauakea, whose upcoming shows include a mixed media installation for the Hawaiʻi Triennial 2025 and solo exhibitions in Taiwan and New York. "I like reimagining what is possible for this medium. Conceptually, it also speaks to reimagining what is possible for us as modern Hawaiians."

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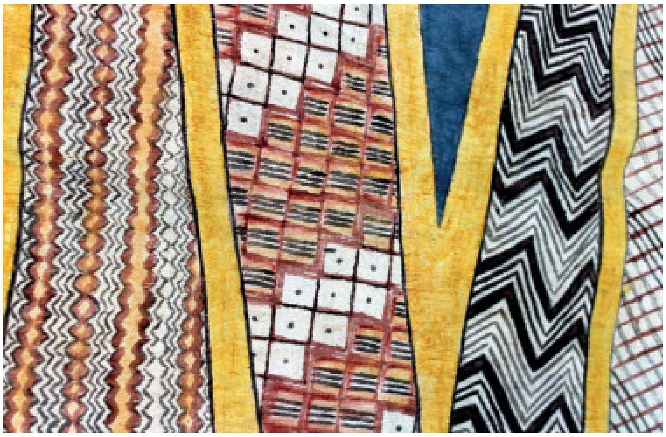


TOP: Dalani Tanahy's *Ku and Hina*, 2011, commemorates two deities and was commissioned by the Disney Aulani Resort, 12 x 48 in. ABOVE: While making *Kupuna Hands*, 2014, Tanahy contemplated "ancestral thoughts and artistry," 16 x 24 in.

Photos by Dalani Tanahy.

lehuauakea.com | @lehuauakea
pukoastudios.com | @pukoastudios
dalani-tanahy.pixels.com | @kapahawaii

Journalist Catharine Lo Griffin has been writing about people, places, and culture in Hawaiʻi for 20 years.

Fishing for Perfection

The makers at Oyster Bamboo construct custom-made fly rods that are as beautiful as they are expertly engineered.

BY JOE HART

In 30 BC, the Roman architect Vitruvius wrote that good design should embody strength, utility, and beauty. At around the same time, ancient Macedonian fishermen began hoodwinking fish with cunning insect puppets (known by the modern sportsperson as a "fly"). And while it's doubtful Vitruvius ever picked up a fly-fishing rod, it's hard to imagine a manmade object that better exemplifies his dictum.

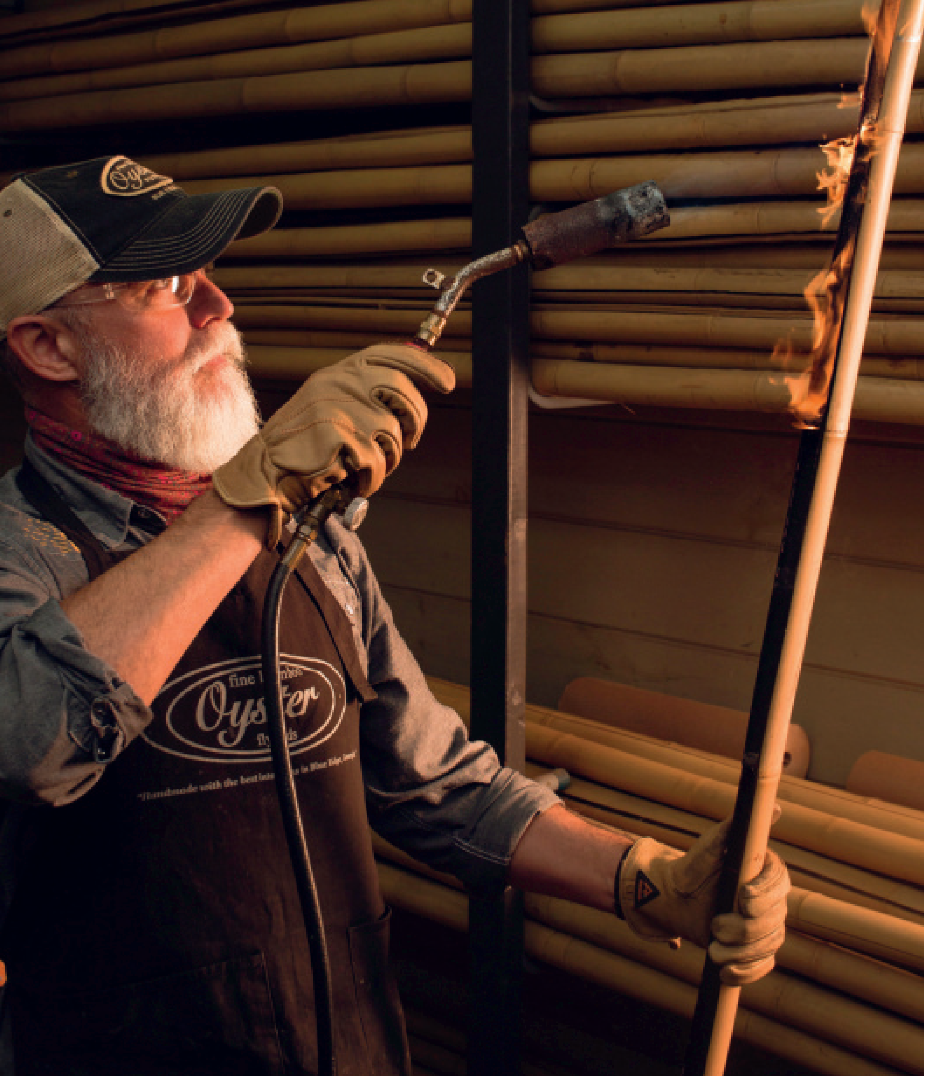
Unlike your average Huck Finn operation (a hook, a worm, a stick), a fly rod is a highly complicated piece of engineering. Since the ultimate goal of each cast is to mimic the gentle landing of a bug on the surface of the water, which fishers do by making mellow, whiplike motions to create a wave, a functional rod will faithfully replicate this impulse and transfer it to the gossamer line connected to a featherweight fly. If all goes well and a fish strikes the fly, the rod must also be strong enough to reel in the catch.

Building the perfect rod, strong yet supple, has been an enduring obsession for anglers. The earliest known fishing guide, *Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*, written by the Benedictine nun Dame Juliana Berners in 1496, includes detailed instructions for building one from hollowed tree branches.

Three hundred years later, a handful of American craftsmen improved on this design, replacing wood with glued strips of bamboo cane. For the next 150 years, the split-cane bamboo fly-fishing rod was the standard tool for anglers around the world, before man-made graphite and fiberglass came along in the wake of World War II.

OPPOSITE: Bill Oyster, co-owner of Oyster Bamboo, casts a fly into a favorite stream in northern Georgia. RIGHT: He lands a rainbow trout.

Photos by Corey Woosley.



TOP LEFT: Oyster chooses a "culm" of Tonkin bamboo and uses a blowtorch to even out color and improve strength. RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Next he splits the culm into quarter-inch strips. Oyster removes all the surface imperfections. And then he hand planes them to form a fly rod's taper.

TOP LEFT: Photo by Samuel Hodges. TOP RIGHT: Photo by Corey Woosley. MIDDLE and BOTTOM RIGHT: Photos courtesy of Oyster Bamboo.

Back to Bamboo

Today, a handful of artisans still work with bamboo, keeping the craft alive one rod at a time. Notable among them is Bill Oyster, who with his wife and business partner, Shannen, has built a thriving trade in custom-made rods.

Oyster's work is prized for its quality, and his rods—priced starting north of $5,000—are adorned with intricate silver and nickel engravings, which can take upwards of 100 hours to design and carve. (The late President Jimmy Carter was known to cast for trout with an Oyster fly rod.)

"Modern-day materials like graphite can be made so quickly and efficiently, bamboo can't compete," Oyster says. "If you only had $500 to spend, you could get the worst bamboo rod ever made from overseas somewhere, or you could get a really amazing modern rod. The only room left for bamboo is the high end. And our particular niche is the highest end of that high end."

Designing a rod involves dozens of intricate steps. The process begins with a specialized bamboo known as Tonkin cane. This species produces unusually long, tough fibers to help withstand the punishing winds that characterize the roughly 30-square-mile region of China where it grows. "At full maturity, it's 40 or 50 feet tall," Oyster explains. "We use the lowest 12 feet."

Oyster wraps flyrod "guides" to direct the line during casting. MIDDLE: An in-house engraver at Oyster Bamboo works on a seat for a fly rod reel. BOTTOM: All engravings at the company—like this medallion—are done in-house.

TOP: Photo by Corey Woosley. MIDDLE and BOTTOM: Photos courtesy of Oyster Bamboo.

Each bamboo "culm" is hand-chosen by an importer who supplies virtually all rod builders in the world. From this selection, Oyster picks out the best of the best, looking for "cosmetically perfect" culms with no water stains or bug residue. "Other rod makers call those beauty marks, but we call them flaws," he says.

Those that make the cut are flamed with a blowtorch to even out color and improve strength, and then split into as many quarter-inch-thick strips as possible. Next, those strips are heated to remove the bent tissue where the bamboo grew its node sections.

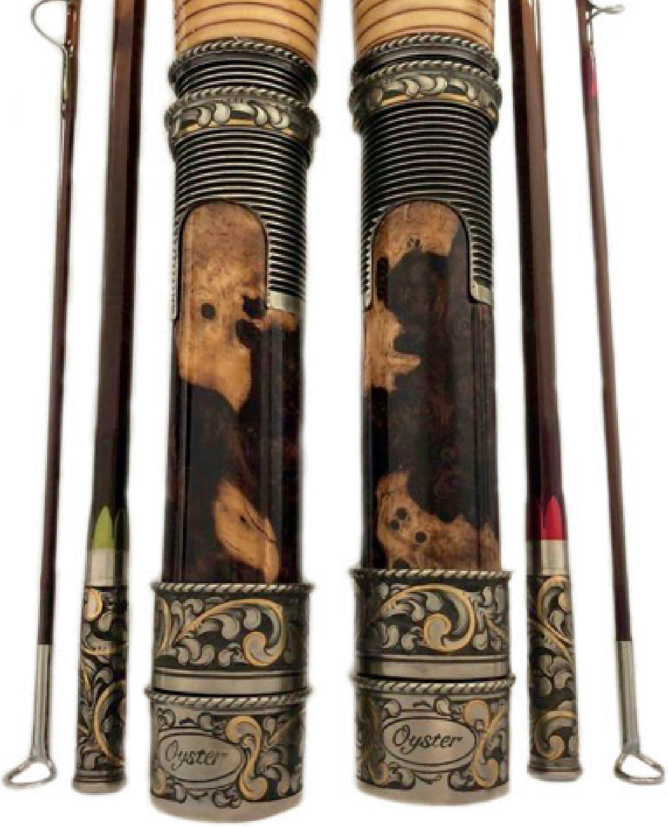
And that's when the real work begins. Each bamboo strip is hand planed to make its long edges form an equilateral triangle, so that when the strips are glued together lengthwise they form a hexagon. Each of these composite strips is further shaped to form the rod's "taper," following a somewhat mystical formula that results in size reduction from the heavier butt to the lightweight tip. To achieve these minute adjustments, Oyster explains, rod makers use a metal form.

"It's basically a big steel jig, which we can set very, very accurately. That allows us to hand plane within plus or minus one or two thousandths of an inch tolerance. That's ridiculously small for basically a woodworking project, considering that a human hair is about three thousandths of an inch across."

A hair's breadth is all it takes, however, to radically alter the mathematical ratio of the taper, and thus to shift the physical dynamics of a bamboo rod. "If you're fishing for a little bitty trout in a tiny stream that's three feet wide, you're going to have a little bitty, very flexible, short rod," Oyster explains. "But if you're fishing in the ocean for a 50-pound fish, you're going to have a longer, much, much stiffer, heavier rod. How it bends and how much it bends, all of that is accomplished by the size

“[The old-timers] were planning on taking what little bit was left of the industry to the grave. The last thing they were interested in was new competition.”

—Bill Oyster



ABOVE: A pair of rods from Oyster Bamboo’s *Epic* series. BELOW: The butt of a rod from the company’s *Hart* series. OPPOSITE TOP: A group gathers for fly rod making class, which has a two-year waiting list. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Oyster Bamboo’s storefront in Blue Ridge, Georgia.

of those triangles along its length, and how those sizes relate to one another.”

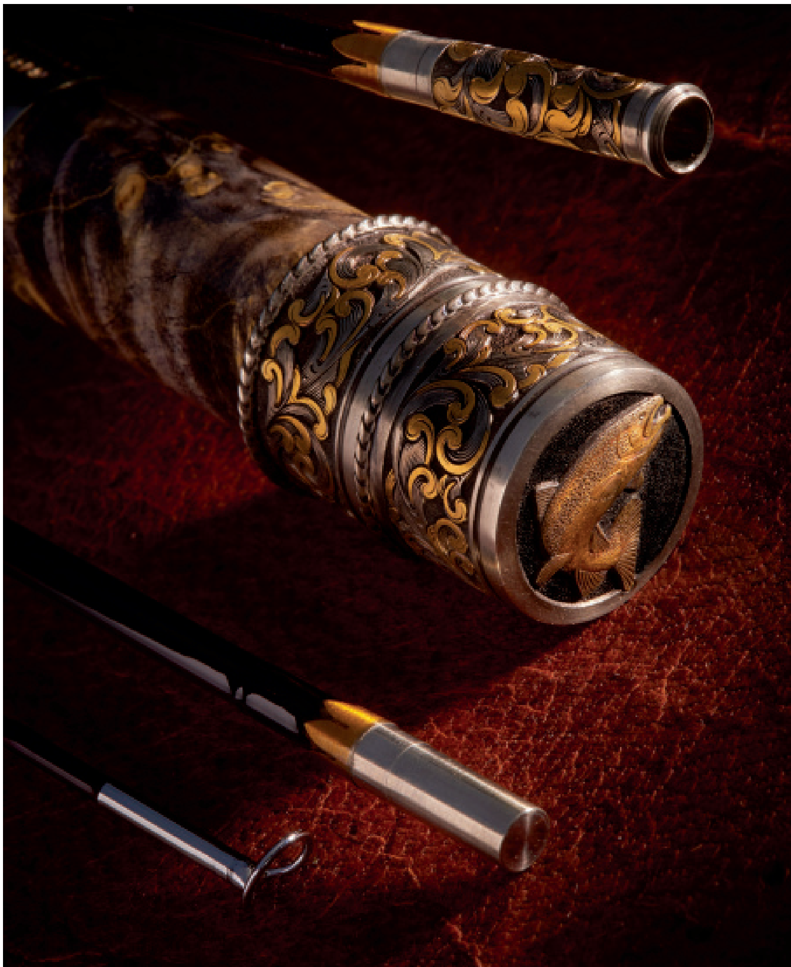
The taper can be further customized to fit the casting habits of an individual angler, says Scott Grady, a rod maker based in Appleton, Wisconsin, who serves as the chair of the Northern Rodmaker’s Gathering, one of a half dozen annual skill-sharing events around the country. “I’ll have the customer bring their favorite rod and watch them cast for a while. You can see how fast they move their arm back and forth, and the way they move their wrists. There’s a lot of little motions I can pick up on,” Grady says. “I can make the rod bend exactly where I want it to and make adjustments just for that person.”

Every handmade rod ever made has its unique properties, he adds. “That’s down to the taper.”

When the taper is planed to perfection, several steps remain before the rod is complete: The strips must be glued together and finished with varnish. Every rod needs a cork handle, a seat for the fishing reel, guides for the fishing line, and ferrules to hold sections of the rod together. In the hands of a craftsman like Grady or Oyster, each of these steps is an opportunity to add beauty and value.

Casting It Forward

In the pre-internet 1990s, Oyster learned from books how to make rods. He found a handful of old-timers who knew the craft, but they didn’t take kindly to a youngster stepping on their turf. “They were planning on taking what little bit was left of the industry to the grave,” he recalls. “The last thing they were interested in was new competition.”



TOP and OPPOSITE TOP: Photos by Jerry Mucklow. BOTTOM and OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Photos courtesy of Oyster Bamboo.

By contrast, Oyster is generous with his knowledge. Each year, he teaches 24 groups of 10 students, and his waiting list is nearly two years long. At the end of each six-day session, students leave with a completed rod. Achieving that level of efficiency has forced Oyster to consider his own procedures. "Why am I doing all these complicated things?" he finds himself wondering. "Are they making any difference? What's the important part of this step? What should I really be focusing on?"

Many of Oyster's students have limited experience building anything at all. Some of them find the experience so rewarding, they immediately get on the waiting list for another go. One student just clocked his 30th time through the course—and he's already signed up for his 31st.

Kade Worthen took the workshop for the first time this year with his father, as a college graduation present. Halfway through the course, he went online to order a display case to show off his work back at home.

"Yeah, it's a fishing rod," he explains. "It's a perfect, functioning rod. But it's also a piece of artwork. It's a centerpiece on display in my apartment, because it's just so beautiful."

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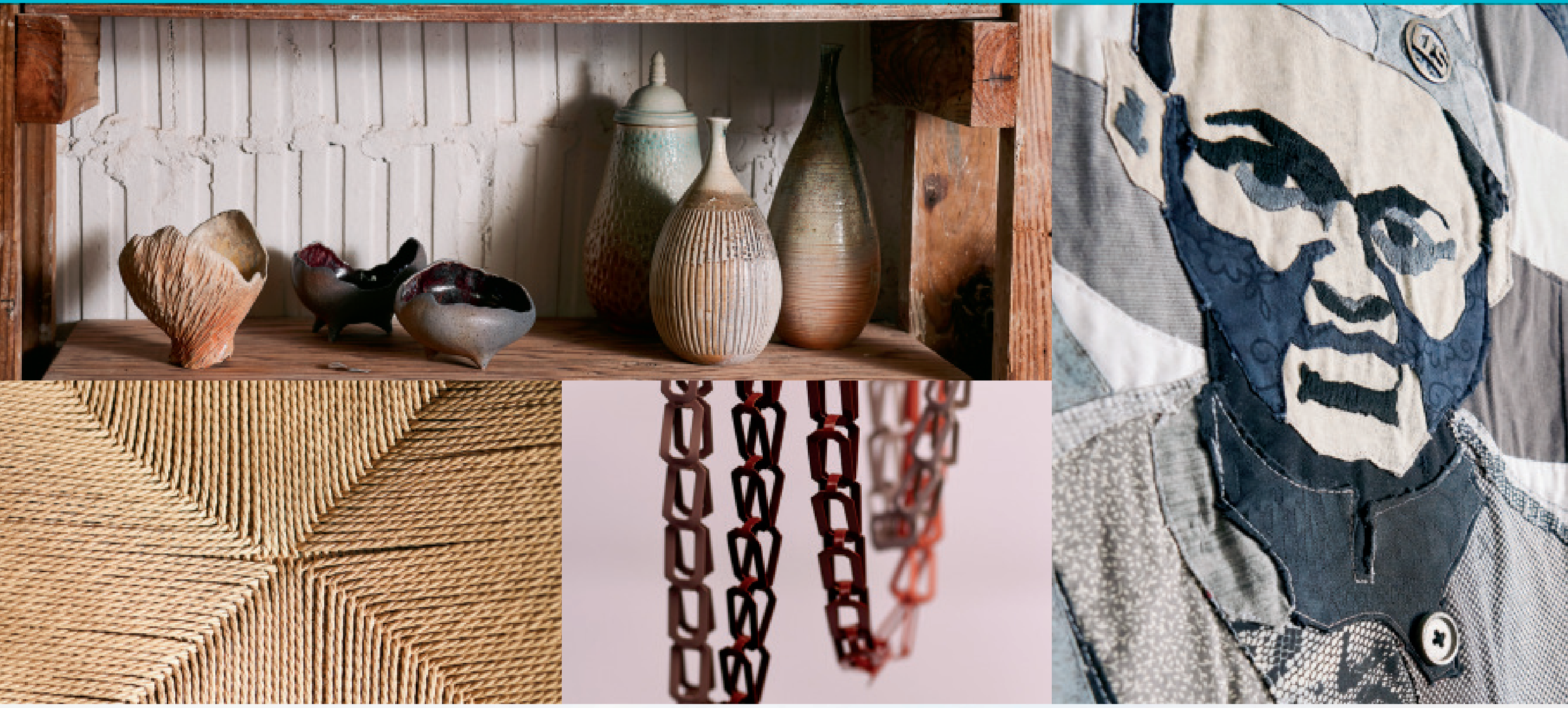
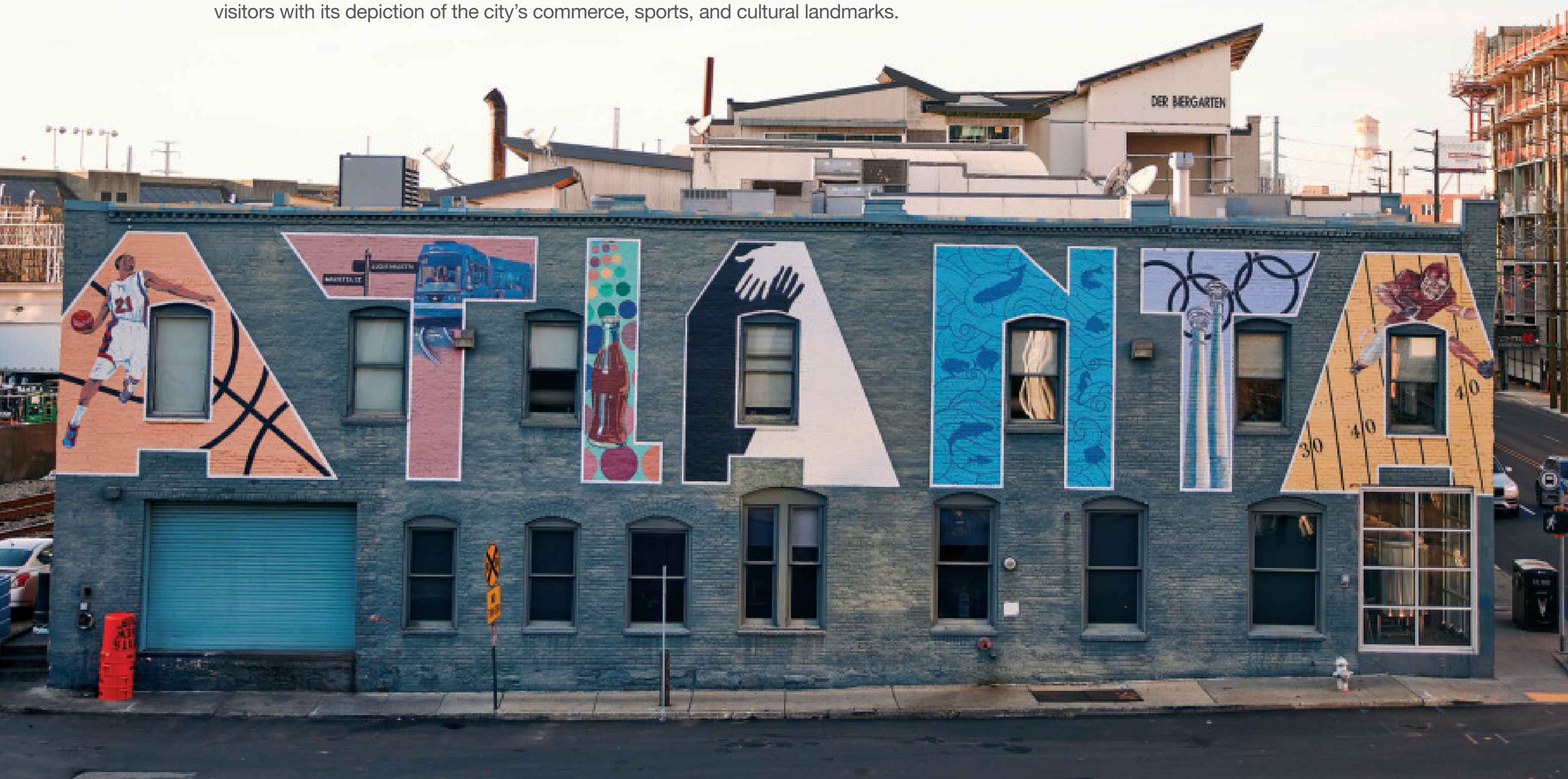
oysterbamboo.com | @oysterbamboo

Joe Hart is a freelance writer based in southwestern Wisconsin. He's also served as an editor for *Utne Reader* and *Public Art Review*.

Craft In Atlanta



ABOVE: Details of works by Robell Awake, Ashley Buchanan, Molly Dudley, Kate Pak, Ato Ribeiro, and Dawn Williams Boyd, who contributed to this special coverage of craft in Atlanta. BELOW: Buckhead Murals' downtown Atlanta mural draws visitors with its depiction of the city's commerce, sports, and cultural landmarks.



Local artists share the people and places that define Atlanta, a city that thrives on diversity, community, and rich craft traditions.

INTRODUCTION: CINQUÉ HICKS

ARTIST CONTRIBUTORS:
ROBELL AWAKE, ASHLEY BUCHANAN,
MOLLY DUDLEY, KATE PAK, ATO RIBEIRO,
AND DAWN WILLIAMS BOYD

CONTRIBUTOR AND LOCATION
PHOTOS: BEN ROLLINS

STORY PRODUCER: JENNIFER VOGEL

Soon after the closing ceremonies of the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, an idea was proposed to Atlanta's Olympic planning committee: give quilts as gifts to the visiting delegations of all nations who would be arriving in 1996. It seemed fitting that this signature art form of the region would represent the city as the entire world came to its doorstep.

The idea gave rise to a massive statewide project involving hundreds of quilters. These dedicated craftspeople fashioned approximately 400 unique quilts, one for each Olympic Chef de Mission (the individual responsible for the well-being of that nation's athletes) and one for each delegation's flagbearer. The exercise was repeated for the 103 nations participating in the Paralympic Games that same year.

"Atlanta," the motto goes, "influences everything." This was certainly true of the Olympic gift-giving tradition which, before 1996, had consisted mainly of the presentation of small mementos characteristic of the host country. The gift of two full-size, handmade quilts for each participating nation was a significant departure from the past. In 1998, this new, grander practice was taken up in Nagano, Japan, at the Winter Olympics, as the Japanese quilting magazine *Patchwork Quilt Tsushin* fostered the creation of more than 2,300 mini quilts, enough to give each visiting athlete a unique gift.

Then and now, Atlanta collectors and artists alike have evinced a significant commitment to maintaining and advancing quilting along with other Southern crafts. The Souls Grown Deep foundation, headquartered in Atlanta, is one of the primary organizations collecting and preserving the quilts of Gee's Bend, Alabama. Quilts also feature prominently in the High Museum of Art's Southern Objects collection, housed within the Decorative Arts and Design department. Gorgeous 19th- and 20th-century examples by makers Black and white, known and no longer known, serve as reminders of the centrality of quilts as storytelling engines and memory storage devices. Other objects in the High's collection include seminal ceramic works by the enslaved Edgefield potters of South Carolina; a range of furniture such as pie safes and cabinets; and pristine turned wood vessels by Edward Allen Moulthrop, the father of modern woodturning, who—although born in New York state—spent many years teaching at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

Contemporary practitioners in Atlanta have extended these craft traditions. In addition to artists featured in this edition of *American Craft*, Etienne Jackson and Corrina Sephora have produced metalwork in both functional and fine art in national and international venues. Textile traditions have been pushed forward by artists such as Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier and Amanda Greene. And Brandon Franklin, one of the premiere hatmakers in Atlanta, has made the craft compatible with contemporary lifestyles, including by making hats for big hairstyles like dreadlocks and Afros.

Atlanta, a city for which relentless renewal is almost a religion, also embraces new technologies and practices. Samuel Thurman, founder of Maygra Studios, is pioneering AI-assisted furniture design that results in one-of-a-kind chairs and lamps from beyond human imagination. Georgia Tech's Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking exhibits a steady stream of innovative paper craft at the edges of engineering. And the region's academic art programs—including those at Georgia State University, Savannah College of Art and Design, University of West Georgia, and University of Georgia–Athens—push students toward newer and fresher approaches to textiles, ceramics, and more.

The Atlanta craft ecosystem is fed by a robust network of support infrastructure. Major studio complexes such as The Goat Farm and South River Art Studios host several artists working in textiles, jewelry, metal, and wood. A central feature of the Hambidge Center in North Georgia is its prized ceramics studio, which receives a steady stream of Atlanta artists seeking to advance their craft while bouncing ideas off the many painters, poets, photographers, and dancers also on the campus.

The Olympic quilt gift tradition began in Atlanta but has continued with versions taking place in Sydney, Australia; Salt Lake City; and Torino, Italy. It's just one of the many ways that Atlanta—already a magnet for artistic talent across the South—not only takes in global influence but returns it out to the world.

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Cinqué Hicks is the former editor in chief—now editor at large—of *ArtsATL*. He has written for numerous national and international publications and cofounded Idea Capital, an organization facilitating small cash grants to Atlanta-area artists. Hicks has called Atlanta home since 2005.

Note: In the following pages you will find lists of artists and craft-related spaces in Atlanta that are based on the recommendations of our contributing artists. This coverage is not comprehensive, and we encourage you to explore more of Atlanta's craft scene.

Photos by Ben Rollins.

ROBELL AWAKE

Furniture maker, researcher, and author

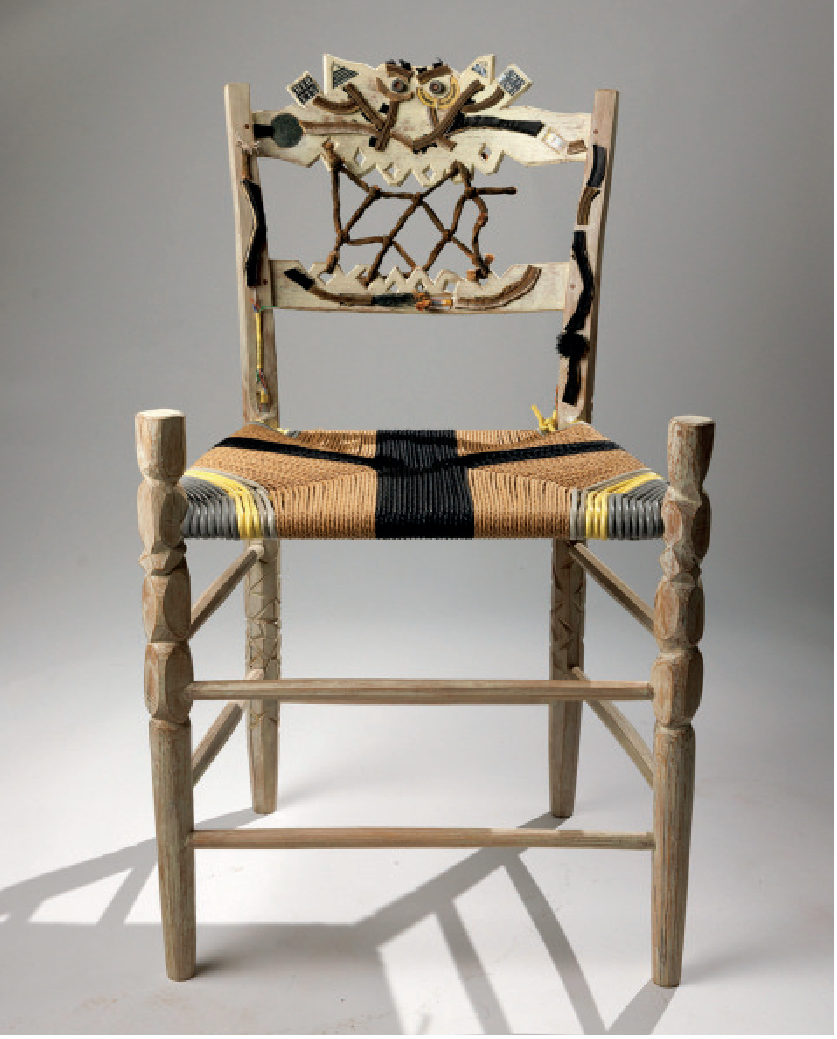
robellawake.com | @robellawake

“I was born in Boston, grew up in the Atlanta suburbs, and have been living in the city of Atlanta for 20 years, since I was 19. I make chairs using hand tools, traditional green woodworking techniques, and regional hardwoods that I split and process myself. In my current body of work, I use this approach to explore two chair-making traditions that reflect my Ethiopian American identity: ladder-back chairs, developed by enslaved African American artisans, and Jimma chairs, traditional in Ethiopia.

By merging and reinterpreting these forms, my work offers a distinctive furniture aesthetic rooted in Black traditions and histories. These narratives are often overlooked, appropriated, or overshadowed by dominant Eurocentric perspectives, and my practice seeks to celebrate and reclaim their significance. Earlier this year, I published a book called *A Short History of Black Craft in Ten Objects* [Princeton Architectural Press] that sheds light on some of these important histories (see page 79).

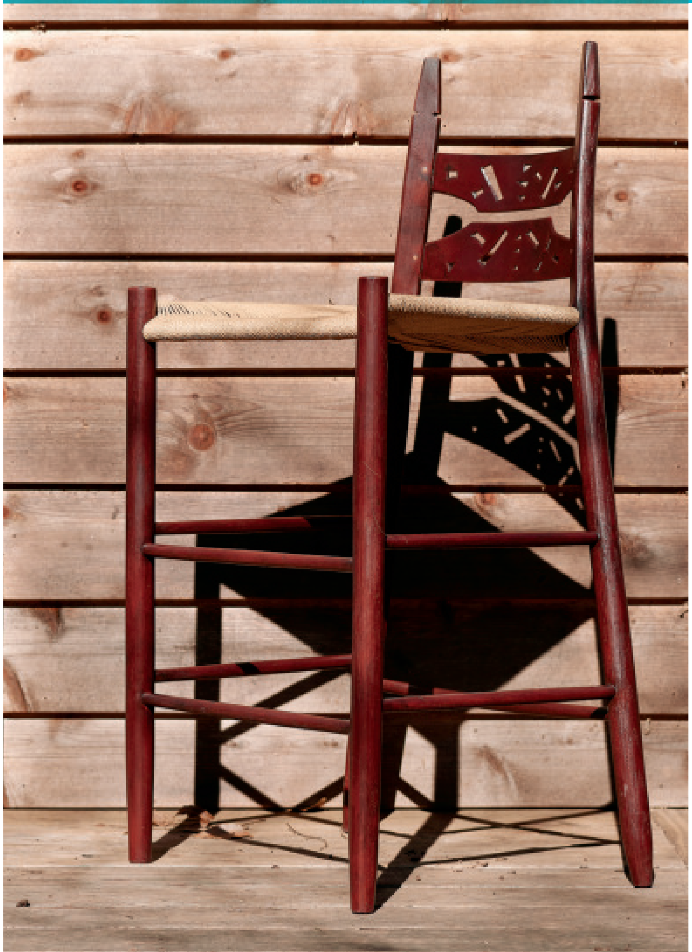
What inspires me most about Atlanta’s art and craft scene is its diversity. Over the past few years, I have traveled to teach at various craft schools, many of which can feel very monocultural. These experiences have deepened my appreciation for just how vibrant Atlanta’s creative community is. Currently, I have my own shop space, but when I was starting out, I worked out of MASS Collective, a community makerspace in the Castleberry Hill neighborhood. For me, MASS Collective represents the heart of Atlanta’s craft community. They offer excellent weekend workshops on a wide range of skills, serving as the closest thing to a craft school in the city. This space has become a hub for countless talented artists. They’ve done such a great job at fostering a creative and collaborative environment within Atlanta’s craft scene.”

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT: Photo by Dustin Chambers.
ALL OTHER IMAGES: Photos by Ben Rollins.



LIE-NIELSEN
LIE-NIELSEN USA

> **“What inspires me most about Atlanta’s art and craft scene is its diversity.”**
>
> —Robell Awake



ACE
The helpful

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Robell Awake’s 2024 chair *America Online*. Awake uses hand tools, such as this spokeshave. On his porch is a chair called *Left in the sons, raisins explode differently*, 2023. Awake at his workbench. OPPOSITE: Awake in his Atlanta studio.

ASHLEY BUCHANAN

Metalsmith, jewelry artist

ashleybuchananjewelry.com | @ashleybuchananjewelry

“I’m sort of from Atlanta. I grew up about 25 miles south of the city in Fayetteville, went to college in Athens—where I received my BFA in jewelry/metals—and bartended in Atlanta on the weekends. My partner and I lived in Tennessee for seven years after college, then moved to Marietta, about 20 miles north of Atlanta, in 2017.

My work focuses on image, pattern, and decoration to reference ornamentation and historical jewelry. I cut iconic silhouette shapes from brass and silver sheet metal using a traditional jeweler’s saw and apply color using an industrial process called powder coating. My goal is to speak with a fresh voice by creating wearable works of art that push the boundaries of jewelry while maintaining a clean, contemporary aesthetic.

I would say the most inspiring and unique aspects of life in Atlanta are its cultural diversity and its tradition of community support. The city itself is so spread out, many of us consider the suburbs around the city proper to be part of Atlanta. And because of this, the range of artists and materials is vast and you get a little bit of everything contributing to one great community.

Support for the arts is expressed in many ways, from shops featuring local makers, to workshops, to galleries, to fairs. My experience with the local craft scene began early in my career, around 2010, with the Indie Craft Experience. This was one of the first craft shows I ever participated in, and the organization is still around today, producing markets, workshops, summer camps, and more. One of my earliest and proudest craft experiences was with the American Craft Council. In 2011, I participated in the ACC Show in Atlanta as an “alt-craft” artist and got to experience a big-time show for the first time as an exhibitor.”

LOCAL ARTISTS BUCHANAN ADMIRES:
Ceramic artist **Mariella Owens**; ceramic artist **Charlotte Smith**; ceramist and jewelry artist **Sonia Rose McCall** of Rose Grown; **Eileen Braun**, who works in sculpture, paper weaving, and ceramics; sculptor and jewelry artist **Donna D’Aquino**; fiber artist **Lynn Pollard**; craft writer **Ashley Callahan**; and jewelry artist and metalsmith **Mary Hallam Pearse**, who was my mentor and very important to my career as a contemporary jeweler.

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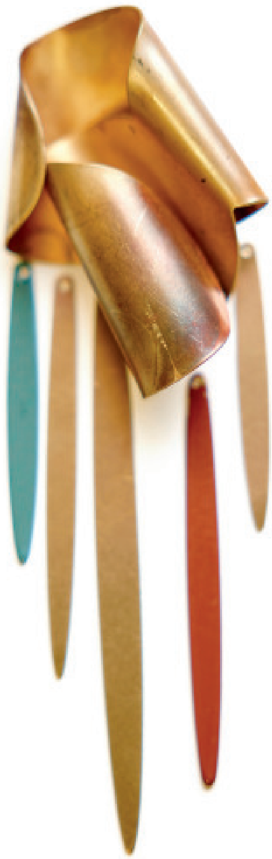
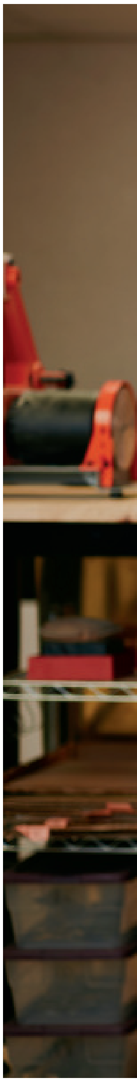
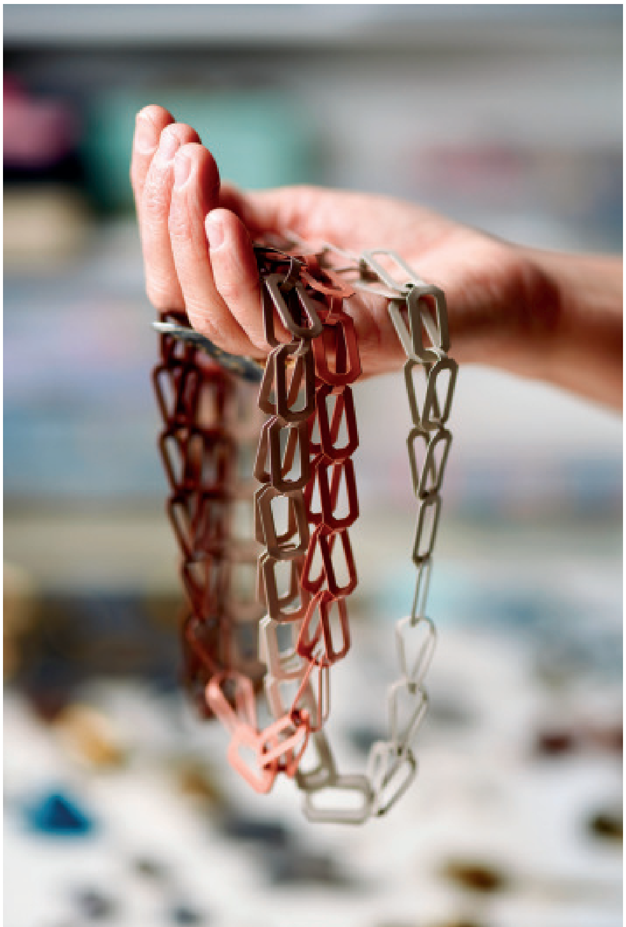


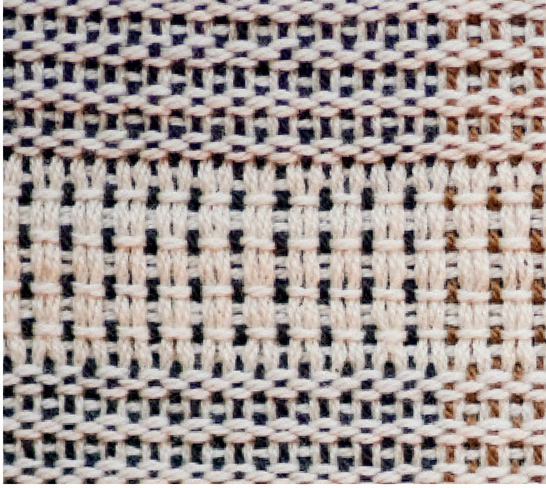




Photos by Ben Rollins.

> “. . . the range of artists and materials is vast and you get a little bit of everything contributing to one great community.”
>
> —Ashley Buchanan

TOP: Ashley Buchanan in her studio. ABOVE LEFT: An array of hammers on her workbench. ABOVE RIGHT: Buchanan pierces and saws brass. OPPOSITE TOP: A prototype for Buchanan’s *Folded* series. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: *Square Chain*, a powder-coated brass chain.



ABOVE: Molly Dudley uses Georgia-grown cotton extensively, including in this in-progress blanket. TOP: Dudley weaves on a Swedish counterbalance loom. TOP RIGHT: A handwoven cotton fabric sample. OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT: Making a warp for a new piece. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Dudley in her studio.

MOLLY DUDLEY

Textile artist and weaver

modutextiles.com | @modu_textiles

“I have called Atlanta home for almost 13 years, after moving here from the Carolinas. Through my brand, MODU, I make handwoven home textiles on traditional floor looms and create sewn garments and accessories. My work focuses on exploring and blending traditional weaving techniques with a modern aesthetic. I prioritize the use of natural fibers, incorporating yarn grown and spun in Georgia, as well as locally sourced fabrics whenever possible.

What I find most inspiring about Atlanta's vibrant art and craft scene is that the city's incredible diversity influences every aspect of its culture—a multitude of traditions and backgrounds are represented. The people of Atlanta are an endless wellspring of inspiration, contributing to a city filled with resilience, creativity, and passion. Activism, often channeled through art, has deep roots in Atlanta's history, shaping it into a city with a powerful voice.

Community support is a special aspect of Atlanta's ethos, with frequent pop-ups, markets, and special art events year-round. The city always seems to be buzzing with activity and creative happenings. Small businesses in Atlanta are increasingly collaborating with local artists for their branding and other needs.

The materials unique to Georgia are also exciting. As a weaver in the South, I'm able to source cotton grown in my own state. Georgia has a landscape rich with native plants that are great for natural dyeing, too. I also find a lot of inspiration in quilting, especially because it has such a rich history in the region.”

LOCAL ARTISTS DUDLEY ADMIRES:
Alice Serres, who works in textiles, ceramics, and sculpture; ceramist **Aleisha DuChateau**, who founded the studio Utility Objects; **Karen Horn Smith** and **Jenny Watts** of Fossil & Hide, who make jewelry; ceramist and jewelry artist **Sonia Rose McCall** of Rose Grown; and functional ceramist **Charlotte Smith** of Charlotte Smith Studios.

aliceserres.com | @alicemserres
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Photos by Ben Rollins.

DO EVERYTHING IN LOVE

> **"Community support is a special aspect of Atlanta's ethos, with frequent pop-ups, markets, and special art events year-round."**
>
> —Molly Dudley

"One unique aspect of Atlanta's craft scene is how each neighborhood, despite being part of a large metropolitan area, retains a sense of warmth and community."

—Kate Pak

KATE PAK

Ceramist

katepak.com | @kate.pak

"I was born in South Korea and immigrated to the US with my family when I was 11, initially living in Philadelphia and later in Seattle, before settling in Decatur, Georgia, in 1996. With a degree in international communications from the University of Washington, I began a career in public affairs, eventually transitioning to graphic design.

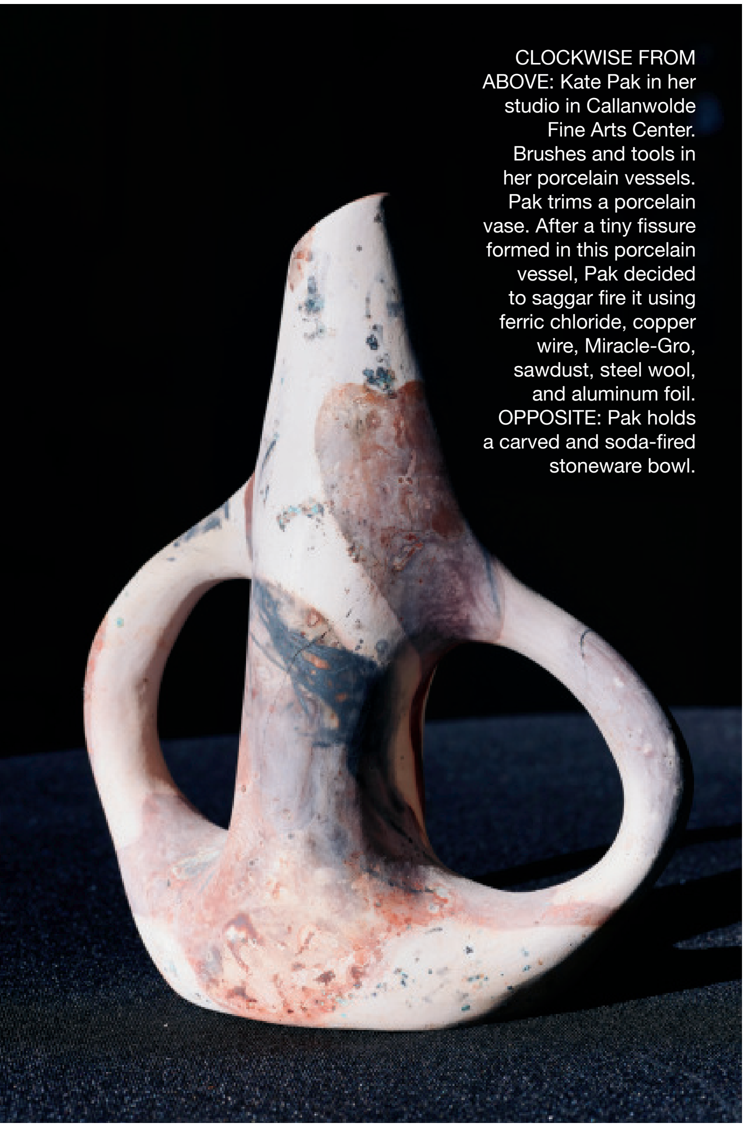
My journey into ceramics began in 2016, when some friends encouraged me to take a class at the Callanwolde Fine Arts Center in Atlanta. Since then, I have participated in numerous juried and invitational shows, both national and regional. Currently, I am a resident artist at Callanwolde, where I continue to explore and refine my artistic vision.

I absolutely love the experience of shaping clay into functional and beautiful pieces of art. Making objects that feel good to hold and touch is an integral part of my practice. I achieve this by shaping and carving each vessel to engage the tactile senses. Often, I leave the surface of my work unglazed to highlight the humble beauty of the clay.

Atlanta's diversity of makers is a constant source of inspiration for me. The city offers an intriguing blend of nature, with its changing seasons, and a mix of historical and modern architecture. The aromas from different neighborhoods and markets, the variety of flowers, and the constantly changing sky—all of these things spark my creativity. I am particularly inspired by how gray concrete walls are transformed into canvases, with captivating murals in various styles. These visual changes make me pause and reflect on my own work, and how my approach may align with or differ from the vibrant culture around me.

One unique aspect of Atlanta's craft scene is how each neighborhood, despite being part of a large metropolitan area, retains a sense of warmth and community. This can be seen in the colorfully painted electrical boxes on street corners, the striking murals, and the sculptures that capture your attention with their intricate lines."

Photos by Ben Rollins.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Kate Pak in her studio in Callanwolde Fine Arts Center. Brushes and tools in her porcelain vessels. Pak trims a porcelain vase. After a tiny fissure formed in this porcelain vessel, Pak decided to saggar fire it using ferric chloride, copper wire, Miracle-Gro, sawdust, steel wool, and aluminum foil. OPPOSITE: Pak holds a carved and soda-fired stoneware bowl.

LOCAL ARTISTS PAK ADMIRES:
John Roberts, who makes handcrafted pottery and sculpture; multidisciplinary artist **Michelle Laxalt**, who works in ceramics, textiles, and paper; ceramicist and sculptor **Julia Burns**; jewelry maker **Priscilla Fritsch**; and weaver **Katie Miller** of Revival Handwoven.

johnrobertsceramics.com | @johnrobertsceramics
michellelaxalt.com | @michellelaxalt
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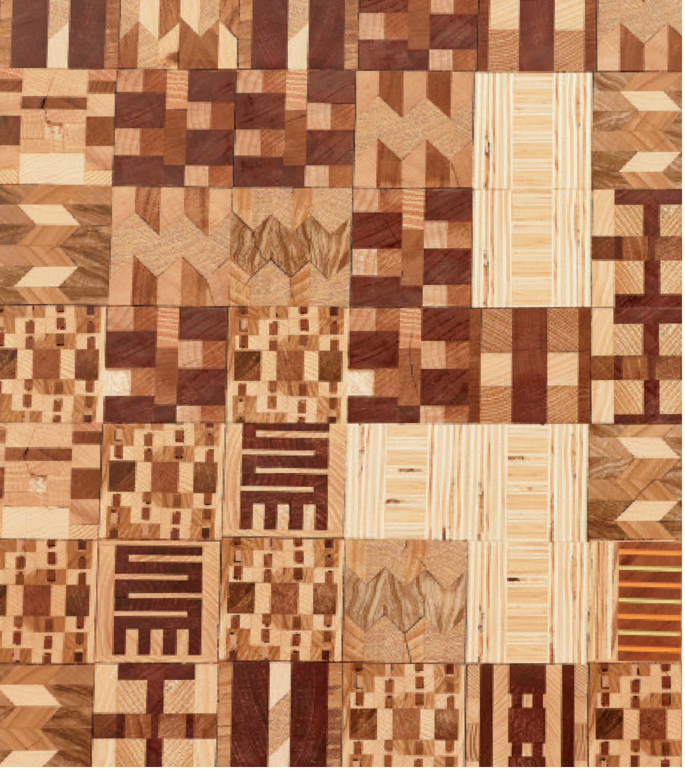
@pkfritsch
revivalhandwoven.com | @revivalhandwoven



ATO RIBEIRO

Sculptor and multidisciplinary artist

atoribeiroart.com | @ilaama99

"I was born in Philadelphia and spent my formative years living in Accra, Ghana. In 2003 my mother and I moved to Atlanta to be near my older brothers, who were attending Morehouse College. I went on to become a "Morehouse Man" myself—as my mother wished—and also earned an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan.

In my work, I use practices of collecting, joining, and refining natural and repurposed materials. My wooden kente quilt works, mixed-media installations, and prints provide opportunities to seek out new points of reference, while preserving layers of African cultural heritage and varying ethnic perspectives. The central query of my work is looking into torturous separation—of peoples, of facts from accounts—and seeking rectification through remembrance. These works are the result of a process that aims to preserve invaluable communities and explore alternate methods of making home.

Morehouse College led me to Atlanta, but I later learned about the city's long history of attracting national and international talent, in all fields, simply because of the presence of spaces such as the Atlanta University Center Consortium, a cluster of historically Black colleges and universities located in the city's West End neighborhood. For more than a century, Black artists and craftspeople have found a home in these spaces, where their contributions to a larger craft and fine arts culture was not only recognized but appreciated. Although most of us still exist in a space between craft and fine art, Atlanta is littered with wonderfully rich collections, archives, and social spaces for communal learning—many because of the city's unique relationship and proximity to these HBCUs."

LOCAL ARTISTS RIBEIRO ADMIRES:
Visual artist **Dawn Williams Boyd**; multimedia artist and sculptor **Grace Kisa**; **Kelly Taylor Mitchell**, an artist and educator who focuses on textiles, printmaking, and papermaking; multidisciplinary artist **Sonya Yong James**; and ceramist, weaver, sculptor, and activist **Zipporah Camille Thompson**.

dawnwilliamsboyd.com | @dawnwilliamsboyd
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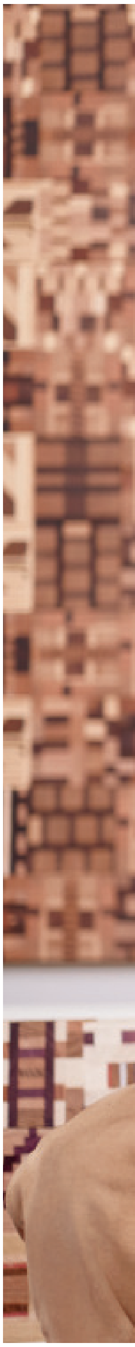
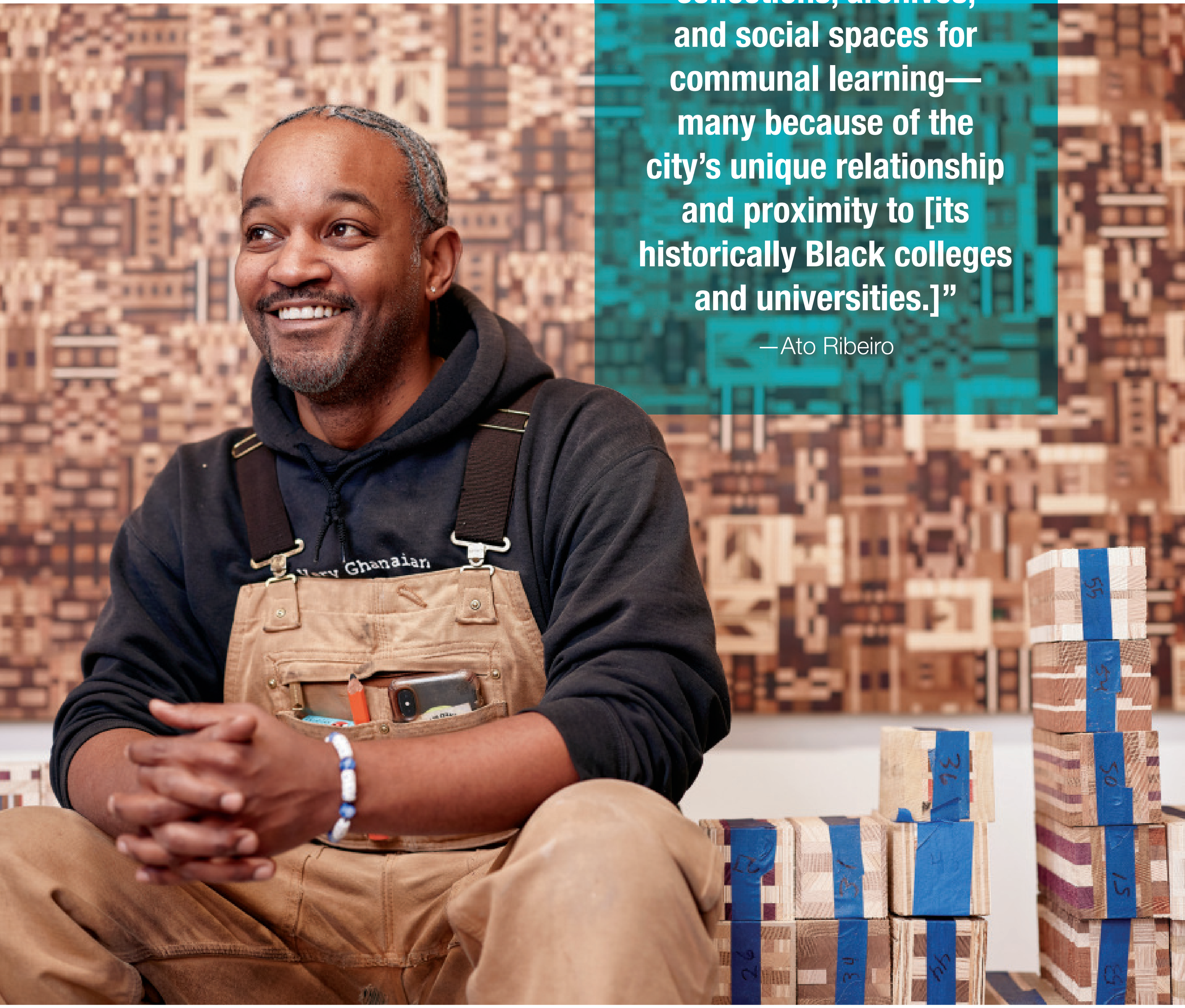


> “Atlanta is littered with wonderfully rich collections, archives, and social spaces for communal learning—many because of the city’s unique relationship and proximity to [its historically Black colleges and universities.]”
>
> —Ato Ribeiro



Photos by Ben Rollins.

Ato Ribeiro in his studio. Behind him is *DUBle Up*, 2023, repurposed wood, wood glue, 72 x 192 x 1.25 in. OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM: A detail of *Home Away From Home #10*, 2023, repurposed wood, wood glue, high-density polyethylene, acrylic, 72 x 192 x 1.25 in. Ribeiro applies wood glue to a backing board. Here he dremels a log cabin pattern.

DAWN WILLIAMS BOYD

Visual artist

dawnwilliamsboyd.com | @dawnwilliamsboyd

“I was born in Neptune, New Jersey. My father’s family lived in Asbury Park, though they were originally from Climax, Georgia. I grew up in the Mozley Park and Adamsville neighborhoods of Atlanta, my mother’s home. I moved to Denver in the late 1970s and moved back to Atlanta in 2010.

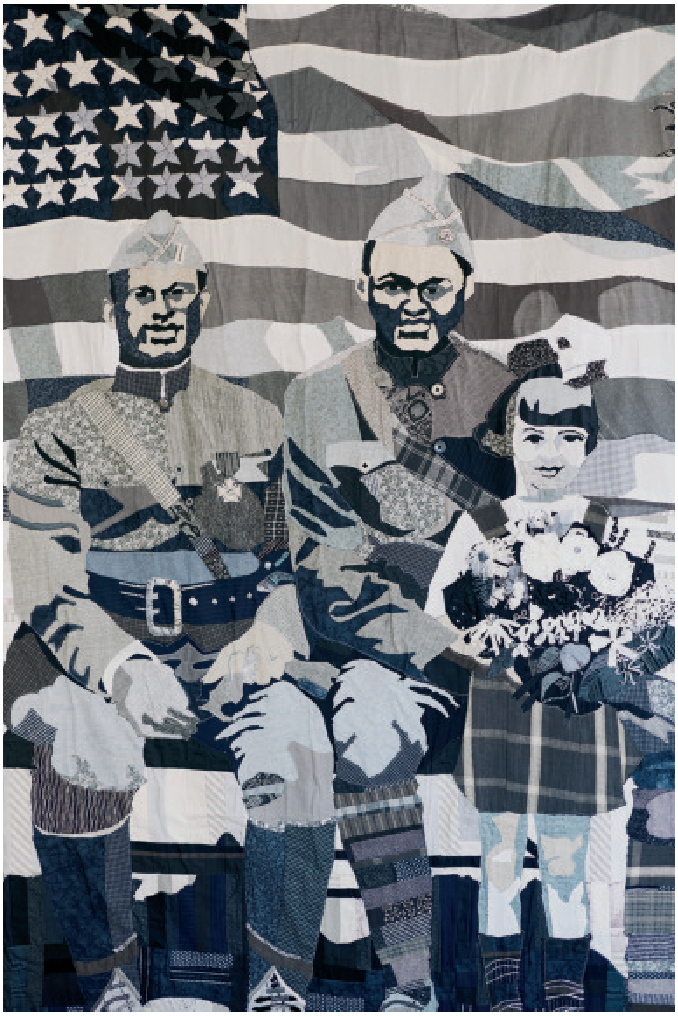
Since 2001, I’ve worked in fabric. I refer to my textile works as “cloth paintings” because their creation combines both my painting and sewing skill sets. Lately my work has been talking about the political and cultural rigors we are coping with right now: women’s rights, immigration, climate change, institutionalized racism, pollution, voting rights, democracy, and so on.

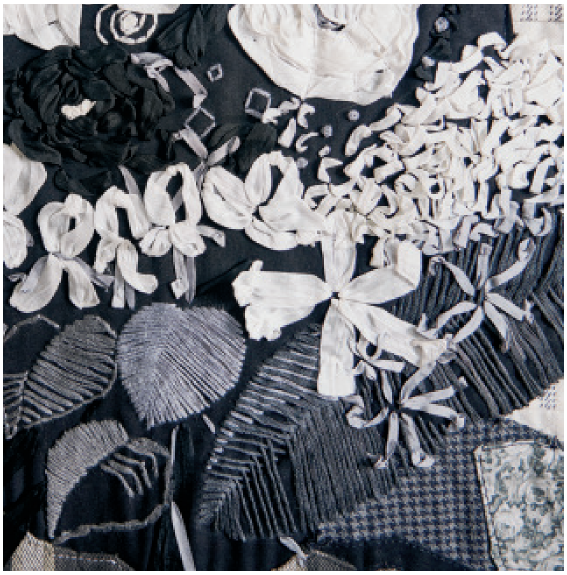
The best part about the Atlanta art and craft scene is the diversity and the sheer number of talented artists and craftspeople who call it home. Unlike many large metro areas where artists are concentrated in a neighborhood or specific enclave, Atlanta has art venues scattered all over the city and surrounding communities.

In addition to the various fine art institutions, Fulton and DeKalb counties exhibit contemporary works by local artists in their libraries, government buildings, and regional art and senior centers. In the warm months there is an art festival *somewhere* in the metro Atlanta area every weekend, in addition to major summer events like the Piedmont Park Arts Festival.

One unique aspect of the craft scene in Atlanta is the emphasis on quilting. I am most familiar with local quilters due to my association with the Atlanta Quilt Festival. That medium is enjoying prominence partly because of the High Museum of Art’s recent additions to its collection of Black quilts and the exhibition *Patterns in Abstraction: Black Quilts from the High’s Collection*. The High purchased several quilts from local artists, including myself, O.V. Brantley, and the late Marquetta B. Johnson.

I will also emphasize that Atlanta artists are buoyed by the support of the community. Many of the art and event spaces I frequent are jam-packed with art lovers. Thanks go out to the many generous local artists who welcomed and embraced me when I arrived here like a guppy new to the ocean.”





TOP RIGHT: Dawn Williams Boyd’s *La Croix de Guerre*, 2009, 70 x 46 in. RIGHT: A silk ribbon and embroidery floss bouquet in *La Croix de Guerre.* OPPOSITE TOP: Williams Boyd in her studio. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Fabric pinned and ready for sewing.

Photos by Ben Rollins.

> “One unique aspect of the craft scene in Atlanta is the emphasis on quilting.”
>
> —Dawn Williams Boyd

LOCAL ARTISTS WILLIAMS BOYD ADMIRES: Wood and metal sculptor **Irvin Wheeler**; basket artist and sculptor **Carrie Gambrell**; quilter **Aisha Lumumba**; mixed media artist **Wycliffe “Linc” Bennett**; sculptor **Tae Earl-Jackson**; wood and metal sculptor **Etienne Jackson**; quilter **Sandy Teepen**; sculptor and knife maker **Lorenzo Lollis** of One Sun Knife Designs; mixed media artist **J. Stacey Grayson**; quilter **O.V. Brantley**; fiber artist and jewelry designer **K. Joy Peters**; painter **Marcella Hayes Muhammad** and her sister, jewelry designer **Dianne Hayes Quarles**, who together run Maruva DQ; mixed media artist **Renae Simmons Walker**; quilter **Jan Hollins Sullivan**; stained glass artist **Marlina Hullum**; and the late quilter **Marquetta B. Johnson**.

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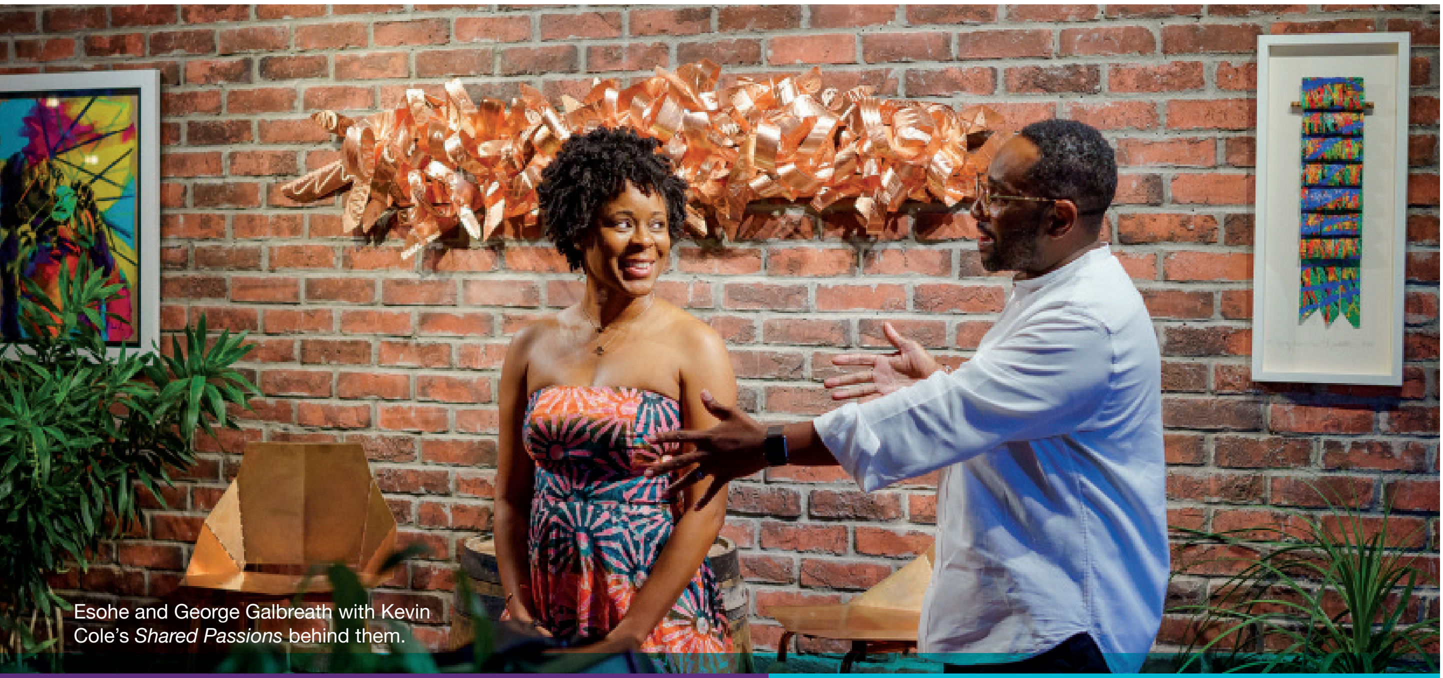

Esohe and George Galbreath with Kevin Cole's *Shared Passions* behind them.

In the Folds

An Atlanta couple tell the story of a copper sculpture made just for them, which forms the cornerstone of their art collection.

BY ESOHE AND GEORGE GALBREATH

The copper sculpture *Shared Passions* (2022) is the product of our two-decades-long relationship with the brilliant Atlanta-based artist, educator, and collector Kevin Cole. But the connection to Kevin started long before the three of us became friends. George was first introduced to Kevin's artwork during his BFA studies at Howard University in Washington, DC, in the late 1990s. He later met Kevin during an interview for a graphics instructor position at Westlake High School in Atlanta. George was offered the job, and 20 years later, he still works at Westlake in the art department that Kevin built.

But it wasn't until we (Esohe and George) met in 2009 that George's connection with Kevin really clicked and blossomed into the relationship we all enjoy today. When referring to our marriage, Kevin often says of George, "He got the right one."

As a couple, we have spent countless hours soaking up knowledge from Kevin—taking direction and absorbing insights on how to manage George's career as an artist and educator, how to shape and grow our art collection, and how to be good stewards of the art we collect by supporting the local creative community.

When we moved into our historic Arts District loft in 2014, Esohe envisioned a commissioned copper sculpture by Kevin, from whom we'd purchased the first piece for our collection. It took nearly a decade of manifestation and budgeting, but the end result is the exquisitely designed and crafted *Shared Passions*, a six-foot-wide work that incorporates shapes representing our birthplaces, wedding and birth dates, and Kevin's artistic interpretation of our love of art, each other, and the community that is woven throughout our journey together.

We were inspired by Kevin's 2018 piece at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, *Soul Ties That Matter*, an enormous wall sculpture that includes continent-shaped aluminum flats and interwoven metal ribbons. It reflects Atlanta's role on the global stage, and we're proud to bring similar ribbons and their message of connectivity into our home.

Initially, *Shared Passions* was the centerpiece of the salon-style gallery wall in our main living area. It's now prominently displayed in our kitchen, where it complements the copper hardware and jewel-toned teal cabinetry and is viewable from the dining table. Lighting illuminates Kevin's thoughtfully placed etchings and the shadows from his signature ribbonlike folds.

No matter its placement, the sculpture will remain a cornerstone of our art collection. It's a beautiful reminder of the importance of solid relationships and the rewards that patience often births.

◆

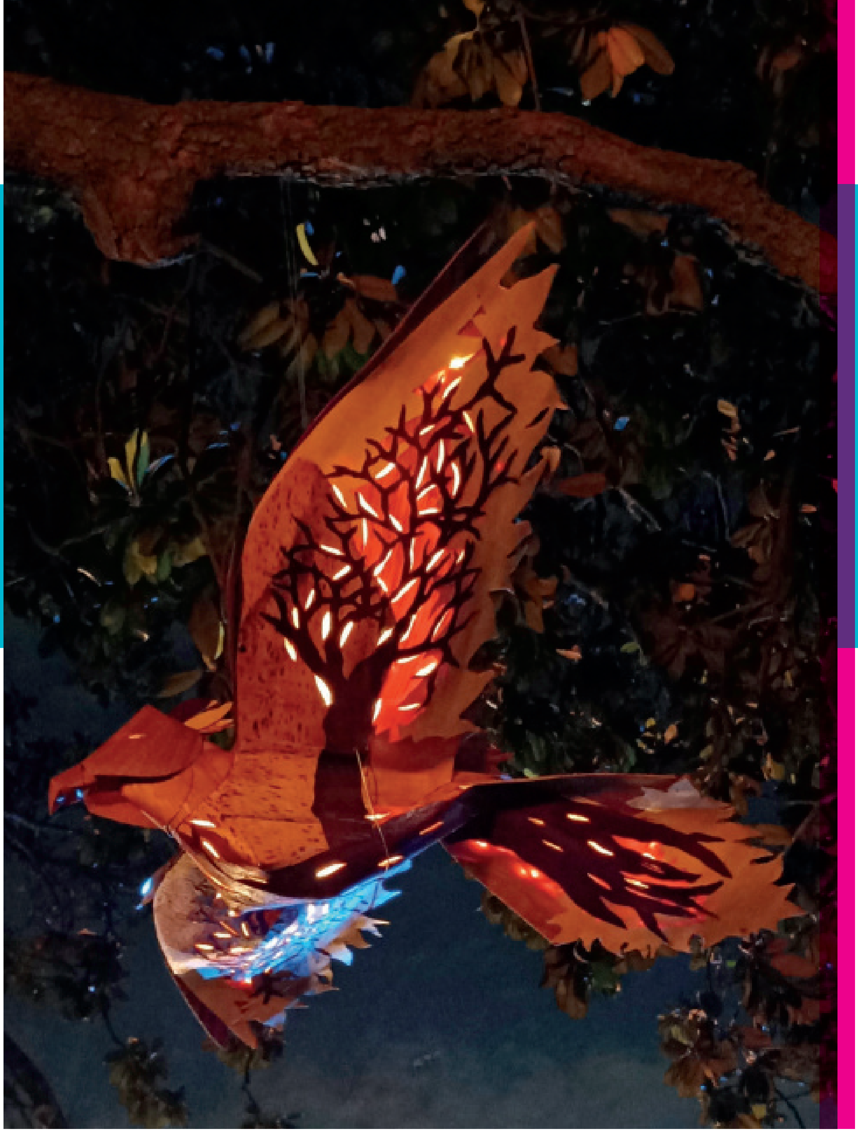
Esohe and George Galbreath, founders of Sohé Solutions, preserve Atlanta's artistic legacy by supporting artists and collectors. Including nearly 200 pieces, their collection reflects a mission to make art collecting accessible and to build bridges in their local art community.

Photo by Melissa Alexander.

Flight of the Phoenix

An Atlanta-based maker and writer describes seeing Dorothy O'Connor's handmade wooden birds lit up in the trees.

BY KIMBERLY COBURN



Hanging from a magnolia in Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery is a wooden bird with a wingspan of roughly 3.5 feet, from Dorothy O'Connor's *Venture (flock of phoenix)* installation.

Photo by Dorothy O'Connor.

Late one spring evening, I carefully navigated the jutting brick paths of Atlanta's historic Oakland Cemetery. Above me, in the outstretched arms of a towering magnolia, five phoenixes blazed in the growing darkness. I tried to take a picture, but it didn't do them justice, didn't convey the way their three-foot wingspans seemed to encompass the whole city.

I had seen Dorothy O'Connor's remarkable suspended bird installations at different parks and public spaces throughout the city, but this 2023 piece, *Venture (flock of phoenix)*, stopped me in my tracks. Five firebirds constructed with over nine different types of wood veneer hovered overhead, lit from within and glowing through filigree cutouts. Their wings and tails had tree branch motifs that also evoked flames, lightning, and neurons. They had been created for illumine, Oakland's after-hours celebration, and the scenic graveyard itself was an integral part of the artwork.

The Victorian-era cemetery is one of my favorite Atlanta landmarks and is, in many ways, a microcosm of the city's complex history. Atlanta's first Black mayor is buried a short walk from Confederate generals. The unnamed poor rest in the Potter's Field a stone's throw from opulent mausoleums.

Named for its trees, Oakland Cemetery is a big-branched oasis. Its walls offer sanctuary—for the dead, for those seeking a moment's quiet away from the din of endless traffic, and for a remarkable arboretum sheltered from the city's breakneck development.

In her artist statement, O'Connor reflects on how trees not only bear witness to history and change but also become sources of nourishment and life even in their death. By constructing her phoenix flock from wood, she gestures toward the cyclical: an acceptance of the way the old must burn down to welcome the new.

Something about these birds captured an understanding of the city I've called home my whole life. Of course, the phoenix is emblematic of Atlanta; one rises from flames on the city's seal, symbolizing its reconstruction from ashes after the Civil War. But O'Connor's family of firebirds offered a more nuanced, authentic interpretation of the city's spirit.

In them, I inferred both grief for the injustices against life this place has seen and celebration for the more equitable future that can grow with the proper care. Atlanta is undoubtedly a place of contradiction, but it's also a city of reinvention. And I like to think of that flock of wooden firebirds shining in the darkness, lighting the way forward.

◆

dorothyoconnor.com | @dorothy.oconnor.9

Kimberly Coburn is an Atlanta-based writer and maker whose work explores the intersection between craft, the human spirit, and the natural world.

EXPLORING CRAFT IN ATLANTA: PLACES AND SPACES

If you're traveling to Atlanta or considering a visit, use this handy insiders' guide to local craft hot spots to plan your itinerary. The fairs, galleries, schools, and organizations listed here are held dear by Atlanta-based contributing artists Robell Awake, Ashley Buchanan, Molly Dudley, Kate Pak, Ato Ribeiro, and Dawn Williams Boyd.

Callanwolde Fine Arts Center hosts exhibitions, studios, workshops, and performances in a 27,000-square-foot mansion.

Photo by Ben Rollins.

Fairs, Festivals, Markets

Atlanta Art Fair
Launched in 2024 by event planners AMP—which hosts similar fairs in San Francisco and Seattle—the Atlanta Art Fair features the work of artists in all disciplines, along with talks, performances, and installations. The 2025 event will be held at Pullman Yards in September.
theatlantaartfair.com

Atlanta Art Week
This locally grown event, which runs from September 30 to October 6 this year, "brings together galleries, artists, collectors, and art enthusiasts to promote cultural exchange, education, economic development, and art appreciation."
atlantaartweek.co

Atlanta Dogwood Festival
Celebrating its 89th year, the Atlanta Dogwood Festival takes place in April and features an artist market, music, dance, and a kids' village. "It's been nice to have people coming back together in the last couple of years, and craft shows seem to be getting back to normal, too," says Ashley Buchanan, who urges craft fans to drop by the Dogwood.
dogwood.org

Atlanta Quilt Festival
In its 17th year, this late-summer festival is "dedicated to the preservation and promotion of African American quilting and other textile art" and showcases quilts, dolls, and fiber arts in all genres. Dawn Williams Boyd recommends this event, which brings together professionals and beginners.
atlantaquiltfestival.com

Community Market
Hosting makers markets in various Atlanta locations throughout the year, this organization aims to provide a "space of support and kindness" for artists looking to expand their businesses and "celebrate Queer joy in all of its facets." Molly Dudley gives this endeavor a thumbs up, calling it "a nurturing community for everyone."
communitymarketatlanta.com

Indie Craft Experience
Founded in 2005 by artists Christy Petterson and Shannon Mulkey Green, this organization produces craft and vintage markets throughout the year. Buchanan notes that it also hosts workshops, retreats, summer camps, and field trips.
indiecraftexperience.com

Piedmont Park Arts Festival
Located in a 200-acre park in the heart of Atlanta, this annual two-day summer event features hundreds of artists and emphasizes "visual arts and family fun." Williams Boyd gives the festival her endorsement.
piedmontparkartsfestival.com

Scott Antique Market
"We spend a lot of our weekends at Scott Antique Market and the Lakewood 400 Antiques Market, where you'll find artisans plying their wares scattered amid the effluvium left over from grandma's closet and great-grandpa's barn," says Williams Boyd.
scottantiquemarket.com
lakewoodantiques.com

Shops

the beehive
Featuring Atlanta artists—like candlemaker Mari Davis and jewelry designer Cameron Kruse—this gift shop on Caroline Street is endorsed by Kate Pak. "Local shops, like Home-Grown in Decatur and beehive in Atlanta, offer eclectic, handcrafted art for sale," Pak says. "And beehive hosts hands-on workshops for all ages. These local spots highlight the city's deep appreciation for creative expression."
thebeehiveatl.com
homegrowndecatur.com

Brick + Mortar
This shop highlights antiques and a line of house-made candles. Its staff also run a jobs program in partnership with social services nonprofit City of Refuge, teaching candle making to women transitioning out of crisis.
thisisbrickandmortar.com

Factor's
Based on Moreland Avenue, this clothing store launched in 2020 and is the brainchild of local musician Matt Lambert, who worked for years with legendary Atlanta clothing designer Sid Mashburn. Endorsed by Dudley, Factor's features bespoke shirts, jackets, and pants, along with custom tailored suits.
f-act-ors.com

Megan Huntz
Dudley recommends this line of fine clothing, produced in Atlanta and New York City by designer Megan Huntz. Her ethically produced dresses and separates can be found at Huntz's shop in the Morningside Village neighborhood.
meganhuntz.com

Wanderstate Mercantile
With its wide selection of handmade home goods, apparel, and stationary, this woman-owned Chamblee shop has earned Dudley's seal of approval.
wanderstatemercantile.com

Young Blood
"Then you have small business stores around the city like Young Blood boutique, which represents local makers, craft artists, and designers," says Buchanan. This boutique on McLendon Avenue—which is also favored by Dudley—features handmade cards, glassware, and jewelry.
youngbloodboutique.com

Art Spaces, Centers, Resources

Abernathy Arts Center
Offering classes and workshops in pine needle basketry, embroidery, painting, and other arts, this center, located in Sandy Springs, is recommended by Buchanan.
artsandysprings.org/abernathy-artss/

Art Papers
This Atlanta-based nonprofit, founded in 1976 as the Atlanta Art Workers Coalition, hosts programs and forums and publishes an online art magazine.
artpapers.org

Callanwolde Fine Arts Center
Callanwolde pretty much does it all. Located in a 27,000-square-foot Gothic-Tudor mansion, built a century ago by the son of the founder of Coca-Cola, it hosts exhibitions in its gallery, performances in its outdoor amphitheater, and art instruction and workshops in its many rooms and outbuildings. This cultural centerpiece is recommended by Williams Boyd, Dudley, and Pak, who is a resident artist.
callanwolde.org

Chastain Arts Center and Gallery
Established in 1968, this arts center is the oldest in Atlanta. Endorsed by Pak, it offers classes, workshops, exhibits in an in-house gallery, and shopping in its gift shop.
ocaatlanta.com/chastain-arts-center

Doraville Art Center
At DART, "art is the point." This center in Doraville, recommended by Pak, offers classes, workshops, and exhibitions—and facilitates fairs and public art installations.
doravilleartcenter.org

The Goat Farm
This lively visual and performing arts complex with dedicated art/work studios recently added apartments. A portion of rent supports arts programming on the premises.
thegoatfarmatl.com

Hambidge Center
Located on 600 acres in Rabun Gap, in the North Georgia Mountains, the Hambidge Center enriches the artists of Atlanta with residencies, workshops, environmental initiatives, and community programs. Buchanan, Pak, and Ato Ribeiro endorse this center.
hambidge.org

Art Spaces, Centers, Resources continued

Harriet G. Darnell Senior Multipurpose Facility
"I'm impressed by the work being done with seniors by artists Kimberlie D. Wright and Jamal Jones at the Harriet G. Darnell senior facility," says Williams Boyd. The programming is part of an effort by Fulton County to provide enrichment classes for people 55 and over.
@harriet-g-darnell-sr-multipurpose-facility

Hudgens Center for Art and Learning
"The Hudgens Center for Art and Learning has excellent crafts programs and exhibitions," says Williams Boyd. The Hudgens—with its art classes and workshops for all ages, sculpture garden, gift shop, and gallery—is also recommended by Pak.
thehudgens.org

Mildred Thompson Legacy Project
Honoring the work of renowned sculptor, painter, printmaker, and photographer Mildred Thompson (1936–2003), who spent the last decades of her life in Atlanta, this project sponsors a residency in the artist's home in Grant Park and earns a thumbs-up from Ribeiro.
mildredthompson.org

Southwest Arts Center
Offering exhibitions, classes, and performances, this cultural center in South Fulton is recommended by Williams Boyd.
cityofsouthfultonga.gov/3300/Southwest-Arts-Center

Spruill Center for the Arts
Located in Dunwoody, 16 miles north of Atlanta, the Spruill Center provides classes, workshops, events, and exhibitions—and gets a gold star from Buchanan.
spruillarts.org

Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library
"We are also home to fantastic archives such as the Stuart Rose Library, Auburn Avenue Research Library, and For Keeps bookstore," says Ribeiro. "These spaces are mostly free and easy to access for the public."
libraries.emory.edu/rose
fulcolibrary.org/auburn-avenue-research-library/
forkeepsbooks.com

The Tenth
"Some additional spaces for communal learning that I frequent include my favorite makerspace, MASS Collective, and a wonderful social club called The Tenth, both of which host workshops and deep-dive conversations into the work and practices of craft people, artists, and arts workers related to Atlanta," says Ribeiro.
masscollective.org
thetenth.club

Schools, Associations, Studios

ArtsXchange
This community art and cultural hub in East Point, recommended by Williams Boyd, is located in a former elementary school and offers artist studios, classes, and event and performance spaces—all in the name of "encouraging, preserving, and sharing the voices and the arts that express our collective humanity."
artsxchange.org

Atlanta Clay Works
Living up to its motto, "Where craft meets community," this space in the Kirkwood neighborhood features a gallery, studios, classes, and the opportunity to purchase work directly from member artists.
atlclayworks.org

Atlanta Glass Art Guild
Founded in 1979, this membership-based nonprofit is on a mission to connect glass art enthusiasts in the Atlanta area, whether they are focused on blown glass, stained glass, torch-worked glass, neon, or kiln-formed glass.
atlantaglassartguild.org

Atlanta Printmakers Studio
Offering printmaking classes, workshops, residencies, scholarships, community outreach events, and exhibitions, this organization—now in a new space in Hapeville, just south of Atlanta proper—aims to raise awareness of printmaking as an art form. Ribeiro suggests giving the studio a try.
atlantaprintmakersstudio.org

Fabricate Studios
Dudley endorses this creative space in the West Midtown area, which offers sewing and craft classes for children, teens, and adults.
fabricatestudios.com

Georgia Association of Woodturners
A chapter of the American Association of Woodturners, this organization provides "education, information, and organization" to people interested in woodturning. GAW meets once a month in the Spruill Center for the Arts.
gawoodturner.org

Grit Ceramic Studio
Promising "pottery for all," this women-owned studio offers classes, workshops, and kids' camps—and is recommended by Dudley.
gritatl.com

The Mable House Arts Center
"In 2024, I gave myself a gift and started taking ceramics classes at the Mable House Arts Center," says Buchanan. "The community fostered there is amazing and full of wonderful people of all ages and backgrounds. There, I met Mariella Owens, my teacher and new hero. She has the most energy of any person I know—she is incredibly knowledgeable about her craft and is a force in the studio."
mablehouse.org

MASS Collective is a community makerspace in Castleberry Hill. It has a shop space available 24/7.

Photo by Ben Rollins.

MASS Collective
Located in the Castleberry Hill neighborhood, this member-driven “inclusive community workshop for all of Atlanta’s artists and creators” offers a well-outfitted shop that’s available 24/7, classes on topics from woodworking to stained glass, apprenticeships, and more. Robell Awake describes this creative launching pad as the heart of Atlanta’s craft community, and Ribeiro calls MASS Collective his favorite makerspace.
masscollective.org

Metal Arts Guild of Georgia
Founded in 1998 by a group of metalsmiths looking to network and sharpen their skills, this guild in Doraville, just north of Atlanta, offers workshops, classes, an artist-in-residence program, an annual show and sale, as well as “the best equipped metalsmithing studio in the region,” says Buchanan.
metalartsguildga.org

MudFire
This membership-based studio in Decatur offers residencies, classes, and a top-of-the-line workspace. Proprietors Deklan Ranlett and Daphne Dail have created an atmosphere that’s “diverse, inclusive, and inspiring.”
mudfire.com

Roswell Visual Arts
This arts education program in Roswell, north of Atlanta, includes classes, workshops, exhibitions, residencies, and apprenticeships. With three facilities—one dedicated solely to ceramics—Pak gives this organization a thumbs-up.
roswellgov.com/government/departments/recreation-parks-historic-cultural-affairs/arts/roswell-visual-arts

Southeast Fiber Arts Alliance
Nurturing a regional fiber arts community through classes, tours, and exhibitions, this nonprofit also houses an impressive textile library.
fiberartsalliance.org

Galleries

Black Art in America
This East Point–based organization—which features a gallery and sculpture gardens—is on a mission to “document, preserve and promote the contributions of the African American arts community” and is endorsed by Williams Boyd.
blackartinamerica.com

Cat Eye Creative
With multiple locations, this organization boasts over 3,000 square feet of gallery and studio space and is recommended by Dudley. The folks at Cat Eye believe “art is for everyone and without a community there is no art.”
cateye-creative.com

Decatur Arts Alliance
“Metropolitan Atlanta consists of numerous cities and neighborhoods, each with its own community-based art centers or gathering spaces,” says Pak. “Decatur, where I live, has the Decatur Arts Alliance, which features a gallery space and public art in the form of murals and sculptures.”
decaturartsalliance.org

Echo Contemporary Art
Ribeiro points to this gallery on Echo Street, which showcases emerging to mid-career artists working in various mediums, including ceramics and textiles.
echocontemporary.com

Hi-Lo Press
This Midtown printmaking studio and gallery provides exhibition space for emerging and established artists.
@hilopress

Galleries continued

Memento
"New creative spaces are emerging," says Pak, "from gritty artist studios and appointment-only galleries like Memento to transformed carriage houses that now serve as art venues, such as Whitespace, which is tucked into a quaint neighborhood." Memento, a self-described "creative laboratory," is located on Somerset Terrace.
mementoatl.com | whitespace814.com

Swan Coach House Gallery
Pak and Ribeiro recommend this gallery on Slaton Drive, which provides "a collaborative platform for a diverse community of artists and curators to bring their ideas to life."
swangallery.org

Whitespace Gallery
This gallery—located in a converted carriage house built in the 1800s—exhibits work in all mediums with the goal of "promoting artistic innovation and inquiries into the relationships that define who we are, both collectively and as individuals." Fans include Dudley and Pak.
whitespace814.com

ZuCot Gallery
Located in the Castleberry Hill section of Atlanta, this gallery was founded in 2009 by art collector Troy Taylor. He and his partners, Omari and Onaje Henderson, are known collectively as "The Art Brothers." The three focus on exhibiting the works of living African American artists and hosting meaningful events.
zucotgallery.com

Museums, Institutions

Atlanta Contemporary
Founded in 1973 as a grassroots artists' cooperative, this institution presents the work of more than 200 artists each year, and also commissions new work. Admission is always free at this Means Street art center, which is recommended by Ribeiro.
atlantacontemporary.org

Bernard A. Zuckerman Museum of Art
Located on the Kennesaw State University campus, this museum presents works from the school's permanent collection and new pieces by local and national artists—and it's endorsed by Ribeiro.
kennesaw.edu/arts/academics/visual-arts/zuckerman/

The Museum of Design Atlanta, in the city's arts district, is the Southeast's only dedicated design museum.

MODA
We want more design, Atlanta.
Full Circle

Photo courtesy of the Museum of Design Atlanta.

Clark Atlanta University Art Museum
This campus museum's purpose "is to collect, preserve, research, and exhibit fine artworks that document the role of African Americans in American history and culture." Robeiro suggests visiting CAUAM, where the admission is free.
cau.edu/art-museum/

Hammonds House Museum
"The Hammonds House Museum is a wonderful place devoted to African American fine art," says Pak. "The growing list of interesting and important art spaces in the city reflects Atlanta's ongoing growth and cultural evolution." Ribeiro agrees.
hammondshouse.org

High Museum of Art
With a collection of more than 20,000 works—including sculpture, contemporary folk art, decorative arts and design, and African art—and a calendar full of social and educational events, this world-class museum is recommended by Williams Boyd and Dudley.
high.org

Michael C. Carlos Museum
Located on the Emory University campus in the Druid Hills neighborhood, the Carlos makes its collections—which include art from Africa, ancient Egypt, ancient Greece and Rome, and the Indigenous Americas—available to students, researchers, and the public. Ribeiro says it's worth a visit.
2036.emory.edu/carlos-museum

Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia
Founded in 2000, MOCA GA is devoted to collecting, archiving, and exhibiting the contemporary works of the state's artists. It boasts a collection of more than 1,600 pieces by hundreds of local artists, including *Home Coming 6* by Ribeiro.
mocaga.org

Museum of Design Atlanta
Dedicated to the "study and celebration of all things design," this museum features exhibits rooted in various design disciplines—including architecture, textile art, and graphic design—as well as a designer residency and a gift shop.
museumofdesign.org

Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking
Visitors to this museum on the Georgia Tech campus gain access to the "most comprehensive collection of paper and paper-related artifacts in the world," including manuscripts, hand and industrial papermaking tools, rare books, and paper samples.
paper.gatech.edu

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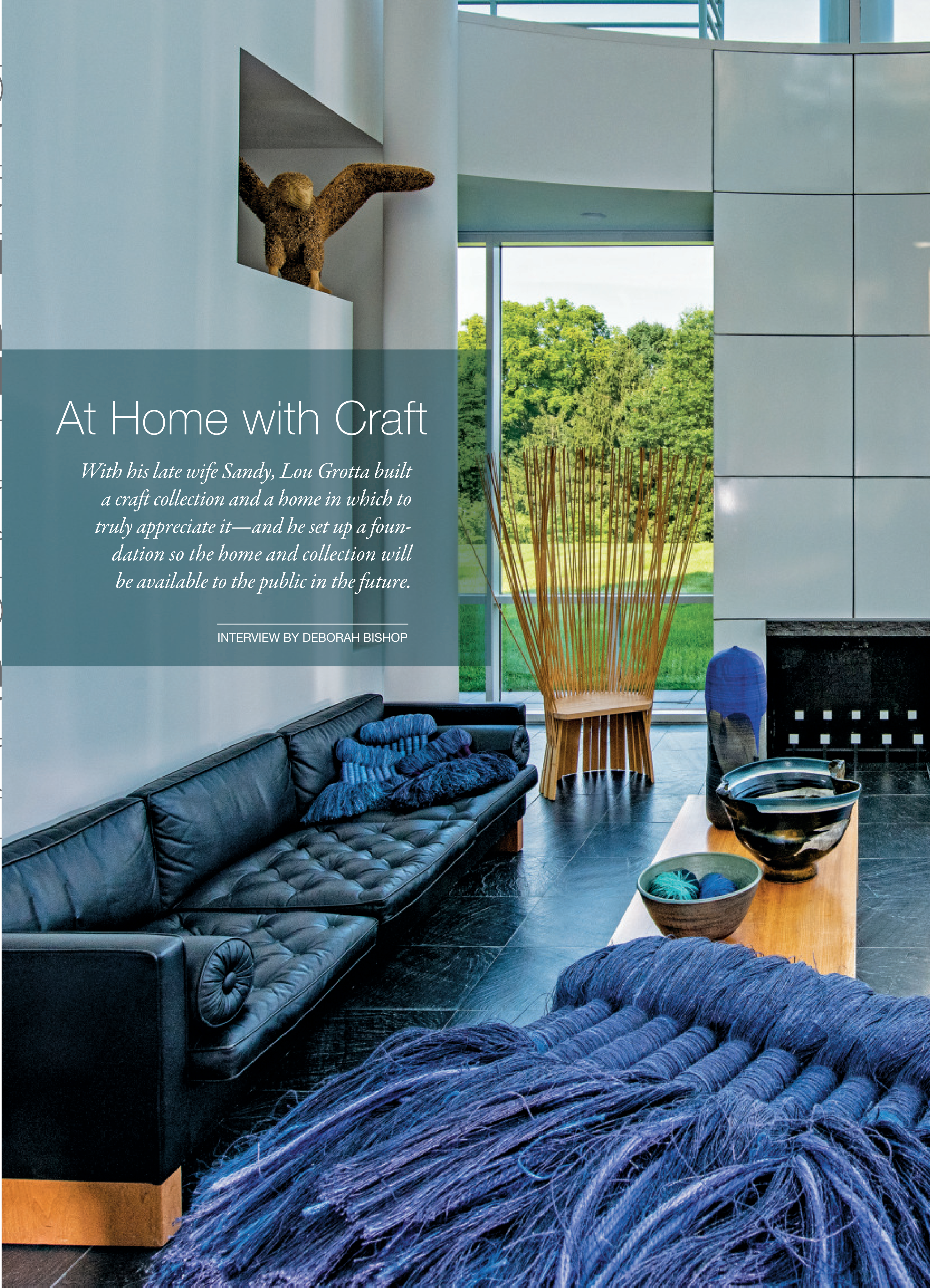
This edition of The Scene was produced and edited by Jennifer Vogel, contributing editor to *American Craft*.

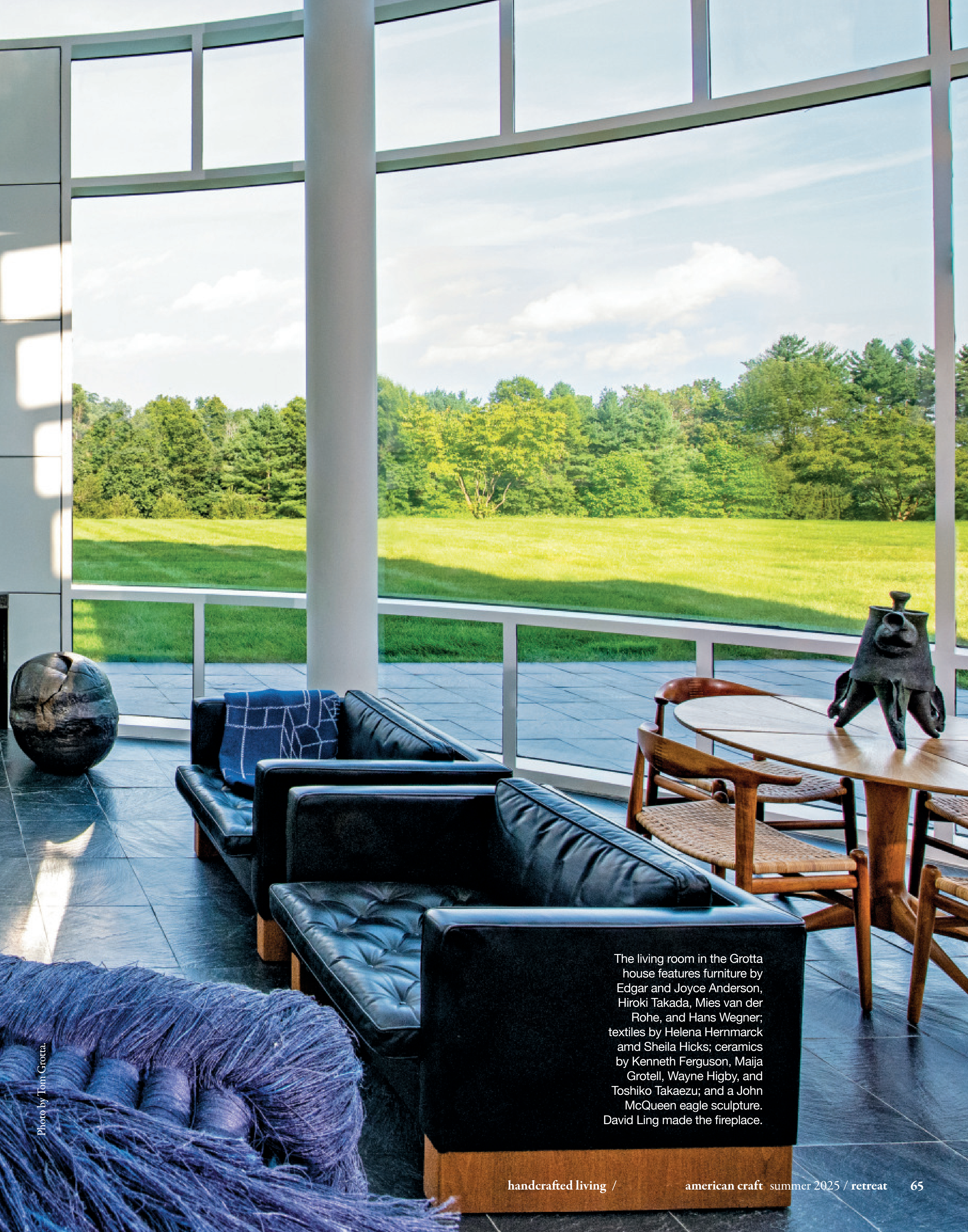
Discover more craft destinations
by visiting the Travel category in the Stories section of craftcouncil.org.



At Home with Craft

With his late wife Sandy, Lou Grotta built a craft collection and a home in which to truly appreciate it—and he set up a foundation so the home and collection will be available to the public in the future.

INTERVIEW BY DEBORAH BISHOP



The living room in the Grotta house features furniture by Edgar and Joyce Anderson, Hiroki Takada, Mies van der Rohe, and Hans Wegner; textiles by Helena Hernmarck amd Sheila Hicks; ceramics by Kenneth Ferguson, Maija Grotell, Wayne Higby, and Toshiko Takaezu; and a John McQueen eagle sculpture. David Ling made the fireplace.

Photo by Tom Grotta.

Although Lou Grotta and his wife, Sandy, amassed close to a thousand pieces of postwar studio craft made by more than 200 artists in the course of their marriage, they never really cottoned to the word *collector*. "People collect sneakers—they collect stamps and comic books and, ya know, *baseball cards*," says Grotta, 91, who speaks with the gravelly voice and polished timing of a Borscht Belt comedian with one eye on the punchline. "We considered ourselves to be orchestrators." It wasn't enough that an object be pleasing on its own, explains Grotta. He and Sandy—who passed away in 2021 at the age of 87—reveled in creating a visually harmonious composition throughout their home, so that no single element stuck out "like a sour note in music."

The Grottas got hitched in 1955, two years after meeting at the University of Michigan. While Lou went on to head up a global electronics company, Sandy became an interior designer. In 1957, they wandered into a show called *Furniture by Craftsmen* at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York (now the Museum of Arts and Design) and were bowled over by the woodwork of Joyce and Edgar Anderson—they even scored a few pieces in the gift shop to take home that day. "Of course, back then, you could buy a set of Peter Voulkos plates right off the wall," Grotta reminisces.

At the time, the couple were cohabitating with the dark antique furniture selected by Lou's mother's decorator for their first New Jersey home. "Part of our instant attraction to the Andersons' work was seeing the beautiful, natural grain of the wood—the material was the star of the show," explains Grotta. Lou and Sandy would go on to acquire dozens of Anderson pieces, many imbued with humor: a towering grandfather clock carved in the shape of a giant wristwatch-wearing arm, a jewelry chest of drawers modeled on a woman's busty torso, a high chair with surreal human arms.

In addition to becoming good friends, the Andersons, who lived nearby, also functioned as networkers. "They introduced us to the ceramist Toshiko Takaezu, who led us to Lenore Tawney, and so on—we got passed around to all the best people," recalls Grotta, recounting trips to East Hampton with Takaezu to visit Jack Lenor Larsen, whose work Sandy placed in her interior design projects.

Other artists took the initiative to introduce themselves. Soon after the couple moved into the bespoke house in Morris County, New Jersey, designed by Lou's childhood friend Richard Meier in 1989, Lou was cold-called by textile artist Sheila Hicks. "I'd never heard of her," says Grotta. "She said, 'I saw your house in a magazine and it's terrific. But it's all glass and steel. I want to be your soft consultant.'" Her work found its way into the home, "and we still talk probably once a month," says Grotta.

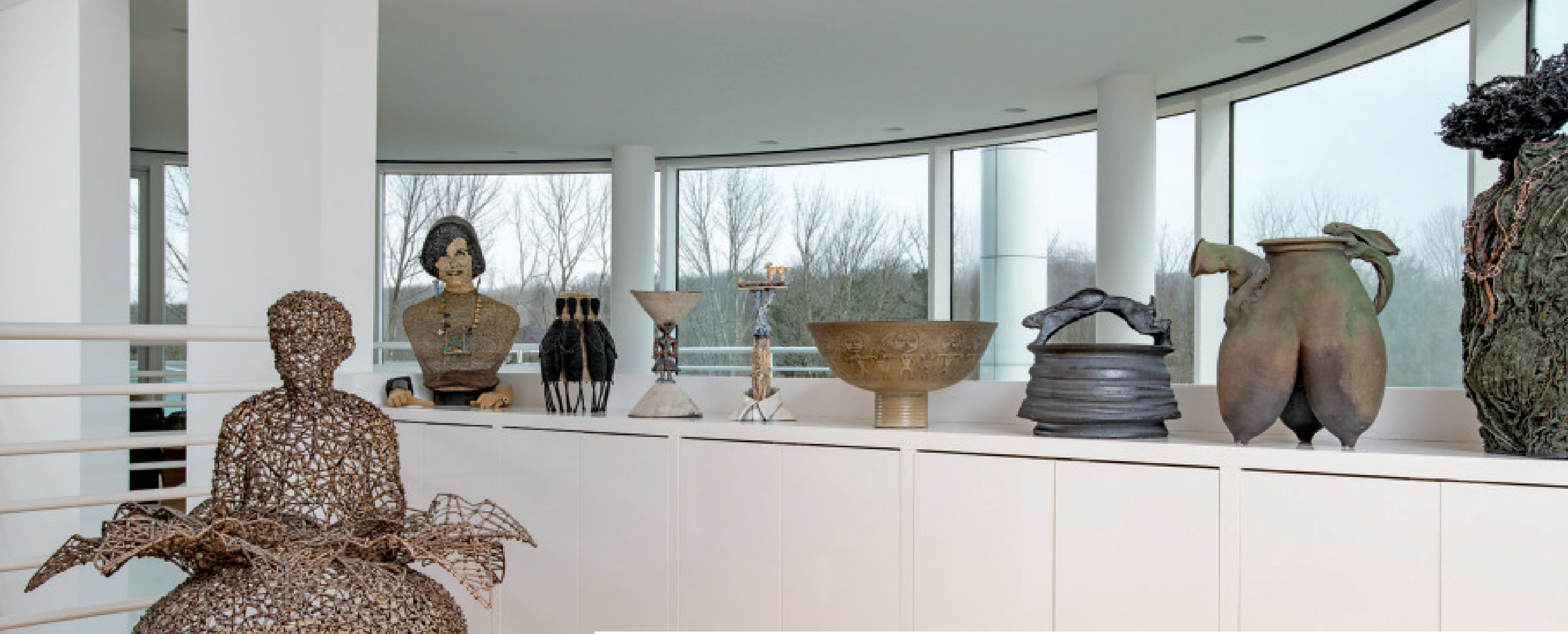
ABOVE: Sandy and Lou Grotta in 2019.

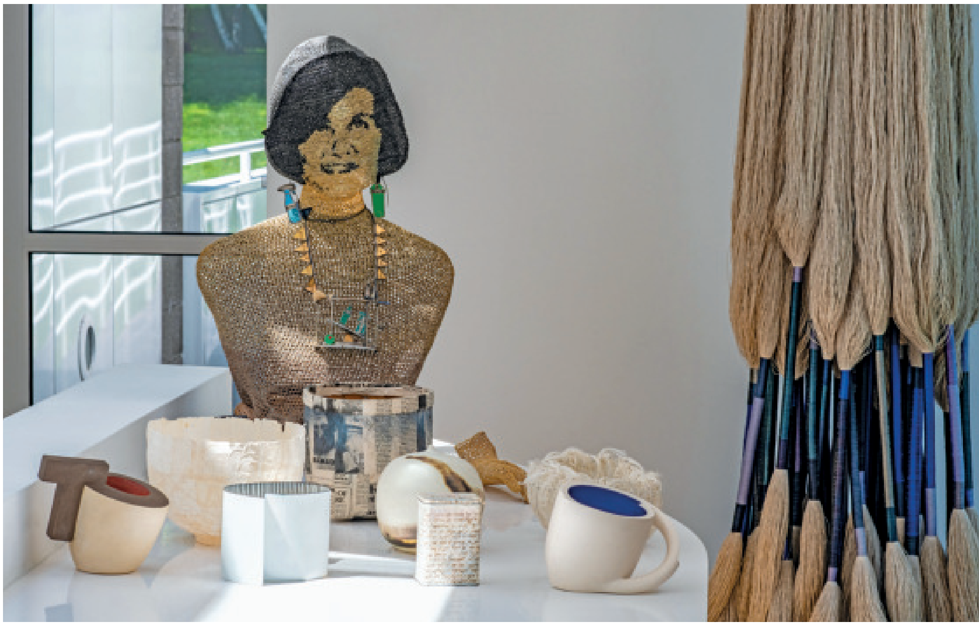
Sometimes it was the Grottas who did the cold-calling. After spotting the work of Hopi jeweler Charles Loloma at an exhibit at the Smithsonian, Sandy reached out to ask if he had anything available. A box showed up in the mail with a bracelet and a note reading, "If you don't like it, send it back." (She liked it.)

Some of the names associated with the Grottas' collection are well known (Viola Frey, Lucie Rie, Robert Arneson, Hans Wegner); others fall into the category of what Lou considers "overlooked and underappreciated" (woodworker and basket-maker Markku Kosonen, ceramist William Wyman, sculptor John McQueen, tapestry artist Mariette Rousseau-Vermette). Their door was open to anything, so long as it qualified as good design. "Sandy's motto was 'shop, shop, never stop,' and she got just as excited about finding a great paper plate in the shape of a fish—or a beaded wire folk-art turkey—as anything else," says Grotta.

And they never acquired anything as an investment. "We knew people who would buy something hideous and toss it in the back of the closet, waiting for it to appreciate. That was not our style," says Grotta. "We asked, would we enjoy living with this piece, and does it have a personality that speaks to us?" Although each had veto power, Grotta

Photos by Tom Grotta.



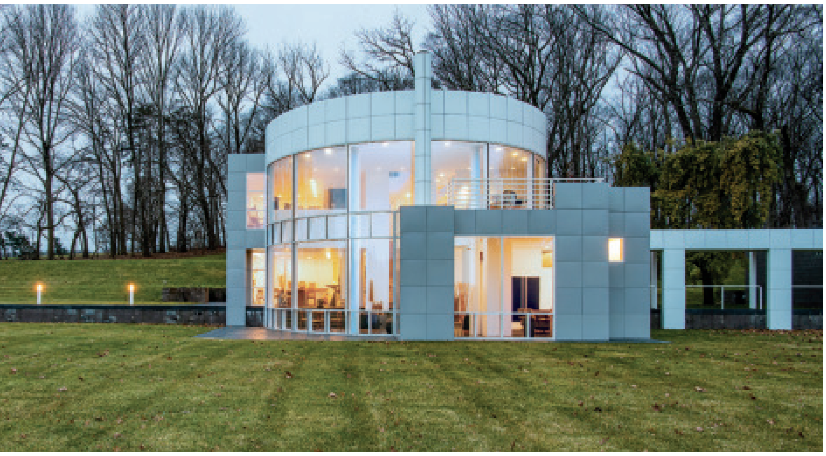


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: In the bedroom are ceramics by Beatrice Wood, Jack Earle, Edwin and Mary Scheier, and Kenneth Ferguson; the sculpture on the floor is by John McQueen. Norma Minkowitz's sculpture of Sandy Grotta, with a necklace by Laurie Hall, now houses Sandy's ashes; *Menhir* by Sheila Hicks hangs to the right. A figurative cabinet by Edgar and Joyce Anderson. *Timepiece*, also by the Andersons.

insists they rarely disagreed: "We just had this amazing simpatico."

Sandy died just shy of the couple's 66th wedding anniversary. In tribute, Lou commissioned several pieces, including a basket form by John McQueen that riffs on the number of days (24,097) and two Linda Mendelson pillows embroidered with the hours (578,328) they spent together. Woodworker Tom Hucker made a container for her ashes that slips into the Norma Minkowitz crocheted sculpture of Sandy, which stands on the coffee table beside the one with Lou's likeness. "When the time comes, I plan on having my ashes mixed with Sandy's," says Grotta. "That way, we'll be together forever."

“Another motto of Sandy’s was *Wherever you look, whenever you look.* We like that feeling of being immersed.” —Lou Grotta



Deborah Bishop had the pleasure of speaking to Lou Grotta about his home, his life with Sandy, and his plans for the future. Following are excerpts from that conversation.

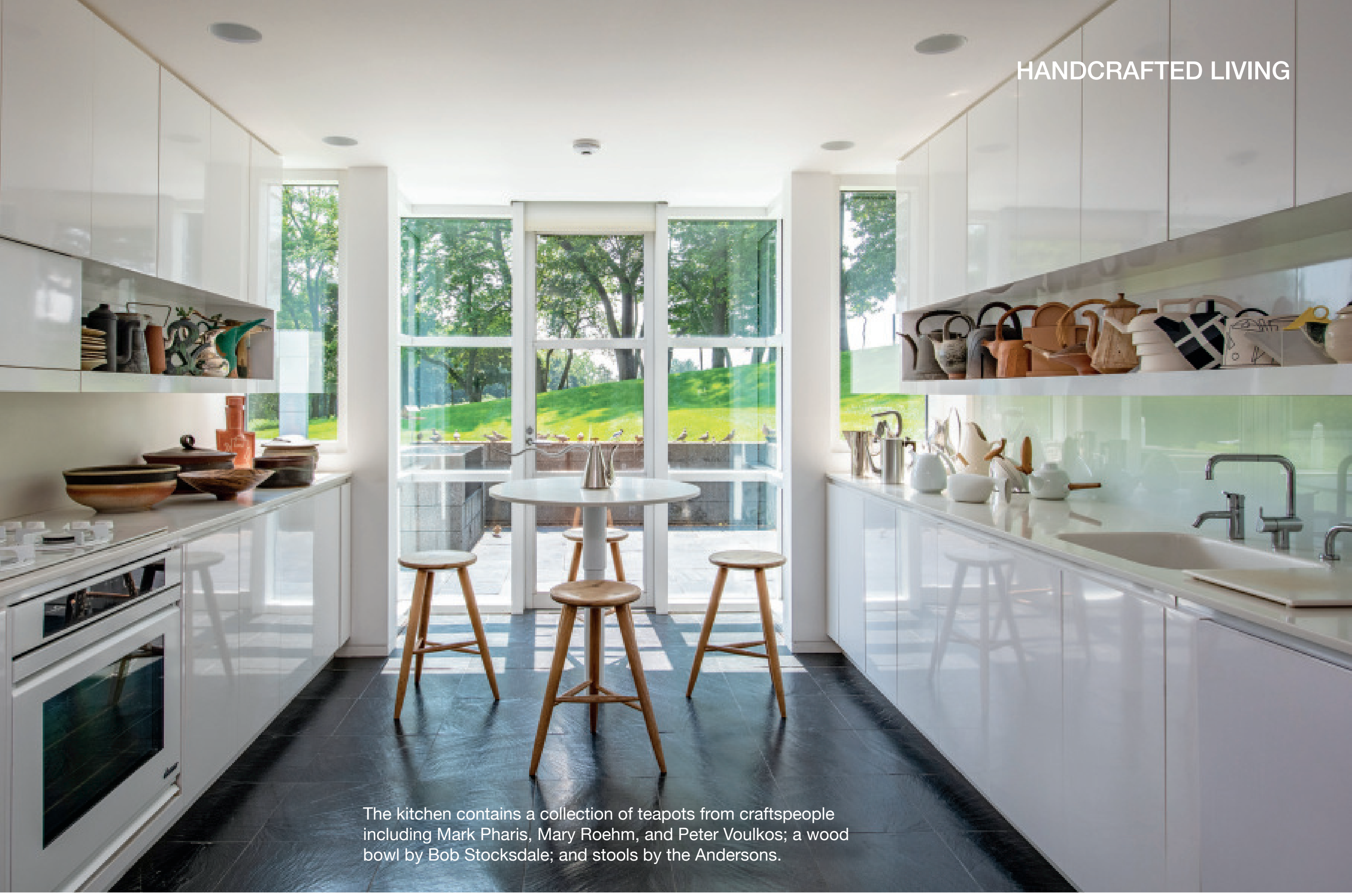
At first glance your house, a Palladian-style rotunda made of white, porcelain-enameled steel and swaths of glass, might seem antithetical to the kinds of tactile, handwrought objects—with their frayed edges, rough surfaces, drips of glaze, and makers’ marks—that hold court inside. How did the house come about? Sandy and I were on the hunt for a new home back in the 1980s, and we were picturing a kind of wood and stone cottage. I grew up with Richard Meier—to me he was just little Dickie Meier from the neighborhood—and I knew he was more of a glass and steel guy, so we asked him to recommend some architects. And he said, “Me! Your stuff is going to show up much better against my white background than in some dark wood and stone cottage.” And he was right.

The site isn’t too shabby either. Your house sits atop a hill overlooking forests, grazing sheep, and acres of borrowed landscape. Light pours in through picture windows—one of which rises 21 feet. Did you place any artwork outside? No, and that’s by design. I’m looking out right now, watching birds gathered at the bird feeder. We get all kinds of animals wandering by, day and night. But the only sculpture that goes outside is by Ma Nature—that’s her territory.

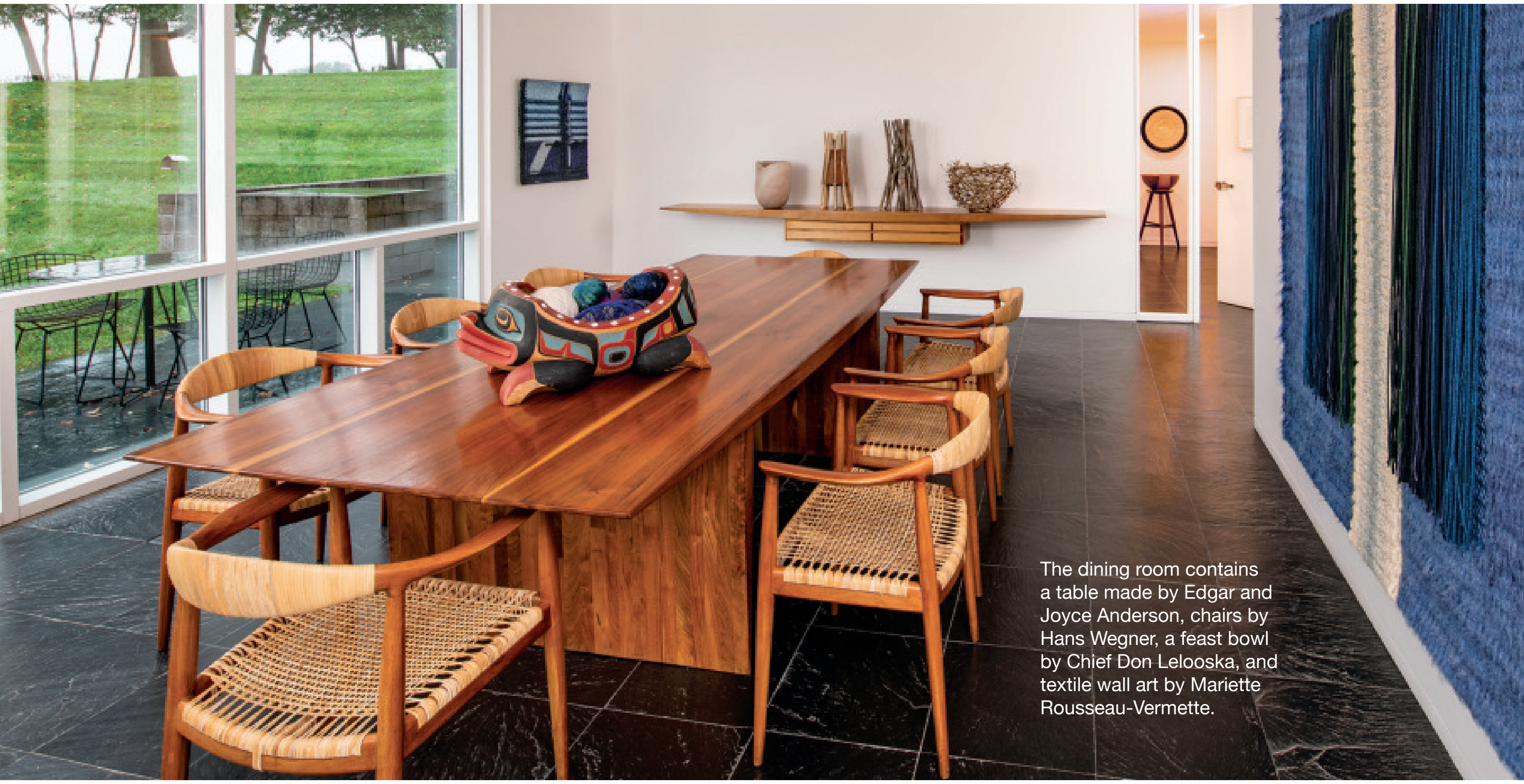
I read that you asked Richard Meier to position your pieces, whenever possible, so that they could be seen from 360 degrees. Do you have a philosophy of display? Another motto of Sandy’s was “Wherever you look, whenever you look.” We like that feeling of being immersed. Sandy and I had gone to some exhibit or other where the objects were shown on steps, so you could walk around and see a thing from different vantage points. The steps that lead from our dining room to the living room are very intentional—at this point there’s something like 16 pieces displayed on them. And all through the house there are platforms for things to rest on:

TOP TO BOTTOM: Lou Grotta frequently moves objects, like those pictured here in the main bedroom, to different areas of the house. This vignette of baskets and bowls includes works by Dorothy Gill Barnes and Tapio Wirkkala, among others. The Grotta home at twilight.

Photos by Tom Grotta.



The kitchen contains a collection of teapots from craftspeople including Mark Pharis, Mary Roehm, and Peter Voulkos; a wood bowl by Bob Stocksdale; and stools by the Andersons.



The dining room contains a table made by Edgar and Joyce Anderson, chairs by Hans Wegner, a feast bowl by Chief Don Lelooska, and textile wall art by Mariette Rousseau-Vermette.

TOP TO BOTTOM: Lou Grotta with works by Dorothy Gill Barnes, Richard DeVore, Kenneth Ferguson, Thomas Hucker, Karen Karnes, Bo Kristiansen, Kyoko Kumai, Norma Minkowitz, Leon and Sharon Niehues, Ed Rossbach, Kay Sekimachi, and Katherine Westphal. *Big-Eyed Face,* a plate by Pablo Picasso. Pots by Toshiko Takaezu.

Sandy's desk, side tables, kitchen counters, dressers, floating shelves, the floor. Absolutely nothing is propped up on a pedestal. I always said, the only thing that goes on a pedestal in our house is Sandy.

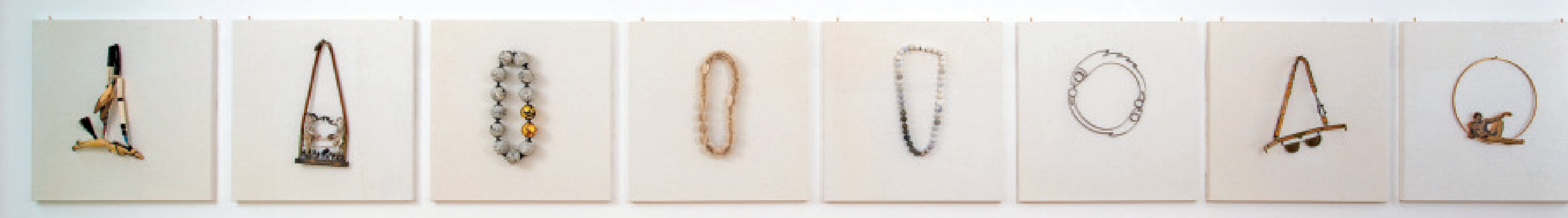
Some people find a place for their artwork and leave it in situ; they're afraid to mess with the composition. But your objects are nomadic—you don't hesitate to move things all around. That's right—I did it just the other day. It keeps things fresh. In all fairness to the work, when you relocate something to a new place, suddenly you see it in a different light. The beauty of our collection is that most of the objects can go anywhere and rest next to anything and look great. We have one Picasso plate, and it's in the bathroom.

The bathroom?! Yes. Some things you have to be really up close to appreciate. We have a wonderful ceramic Ken Ferguson rabbit plate, for instance, and the best vantage point is sitting on the throne. And a couple dozen of Toshiko's pots are around the bathtub. I always say the worst thing to be is a piece of jewelry, because you spend most of your life in the drawer.

You and Sandy solved that by liberating her jewelry and displaying it all around the house. That's right! It's every bit as worthy of showing off as the baskets and bowls and teapots and tapestries. In fact, the English jeweler Wendy Ramshaw used to ship her pieces with these beautiful stands that are like little sculptures. And Tom Hucker, the furniture maker, carved Sandy jewelry trees to show off her rings and bracelets.

What were a few of the ways you and Sandy discovered new work? We went to the fairs, like SOFA [formerly the Sculpture Objects Functional Art and Design Fair, now called Intersect Chicago] and Rhinebeck. And galleries that specialized in craft, like Dorothy Weiss in San Francisco and Helen Drutt on the East Coast—we bought a lot of jewelry from her. Our son Tom and his wife have an important fiber art gallery in Connecticut [browngrotta arts is featured in the Spring 2025 issue of *American Craft*]. And the museums had national groups of collectors that took a few trips a year.

We also had close relationships with a lot of artists, although some things took some coaxing. We have 70-something pieces by our good friend Toshiko [Takaezu], and it took us 20 years to get her to part with one particular pot she'd made at Cranbrook and said she couldn't repeat. It was worth the wait!



Sandy Grotta's necklace collection displayed on the walls. RIGHT TOP: Sandy in a bracelet by David Watkins, a necklace by Gerd Rothmann, and earrings by Eva Eisler. RIGHT BOTTOM: A ring tree by Thomas Hucker holds jewelry from the Grottas' extensive collection of American and European artists.

> "I always say the worst thing to be is a piece of jewelry, because you spend most of your life in the drawer." —Lou Grotta

You and Sandy acquired multitudes of ceramic, jewelry, fiber, and wood pieces, but very little glass. Is there a reason? It's all about tactility—that's what drew us to craft in the first place. And it's funny—the one glass piece we have that isn't utilitarian has been sandblasted so it looks like clay.

You recently established a foundation, and your town granted a variance that will allow you to keep your collection together in the house in perpetuity. How will this work? So, when I go to hell, all the work will be kept together and intact. The house will be open to small tour groups—a six-pack or eight-pack at a time, because it isn't all that big—and somebody will live on the premises. Without this provision, a lot of the work would inevitably end up shoved into storage—because museums only have so much floor space—or mashed up next to something that would have made Sandy cringe. This way, people can see the work and the house—because there are damn few good architectural houses around. And if they can't make it here, the website is the next best thing to being here.

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grottahouse.com | @grottahouse

Deborah Bishop is a frequent contributor to *American Craft*.

The Grotta Home
by Richard Meier
A Marriage of Architecture and Craft

Photos by Tom Grotta.

HEYTHERE PROJECTS
JOSHUA TREE, CA
ART BOOKS GIFTS

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HeyThere Projects' street sign, made by Lili Todd, invites in tourists and locals alike. Aaron Smith holds a sculpture by Godeleine de Rosamel. Mark Todd with the same sculpture. People gather at a show by Martha Rich. Works by Lorien Stern in the gallery space.

Photos by Aaron Smith.

A Gallery for Friends

Right outside Joshua Tree National Park, the work shown at HeyThere Projects reflects the unique aesthetics of its owners.

BY EMILY FREIDENRICH

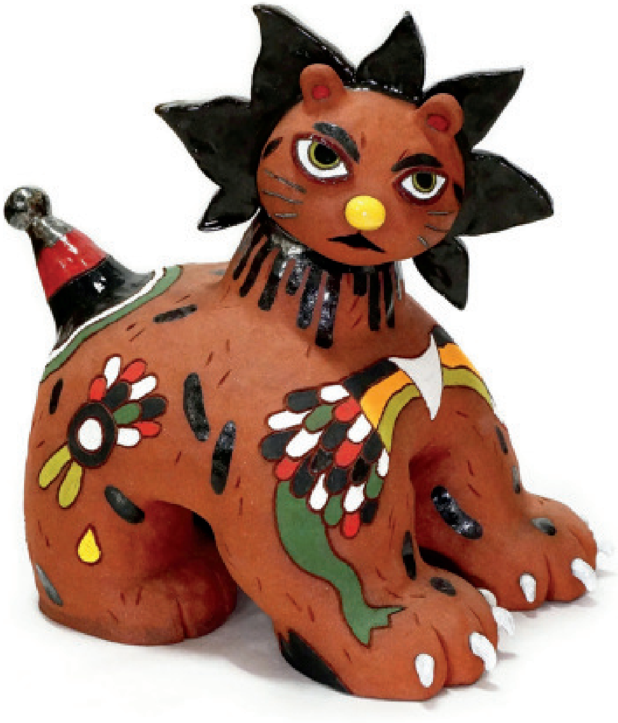
HeyThere Projects in Joshua Tree, California, is a friendly place. "I naturally say 'Hey!' when people come in," cofounder Aaron Smith says, and not even because of the name: "Just because it's a nice, low-key greeting." It's that kind of energy, as if you already know each other, that permeates the gallery/shop/event space and its rotating displays of playful, colorful, craft-infused art, as well as its community-driven events.

The space was founded in 2019 by "intrepid artists and old friends" Mark Todd, a mixed-media artist, and Smith, a painter and art educator. HeyThere's gallery often spotlights their artist friends and friends-of-friends from years spent living in New York, Los Angeles, and now the Joshua Tree community. Think the cheeky menagerie of Lorien Stern, candy-colored iconography of Martha Rich, and pop-culture-incised ceramics by tattooer-turned-potter Adam Shrewsbury. "We've tried to integrate art and craft together," Smith says. "We both come from illustration backgrounds and fine art painting, but we are drawn to artists who are working across all these lines, blurring that traditional demarcation." A recent show by LA artist Nick Aguayo included works on paper, with a limited run of unique hand-printed T-shirts that carried his painterly sensibility seamlessly into wearable art.

And certainly, the desert backdrop is rich, creative ground for artists: the meditative isolation, the stark and sculptural landscape, prickly flora (Chimayo cactus, yucca, and the iconic namesake trees), all caught against vast and vivid skies. "The way the art interfaces with the natural world in Joshua Tree is why many artists are drawn to us," says Todd. "We've had artists come here to work and finish and produce their shows. Joshua Tree has a long history of being a draw, a mecca of sorts for creatives, and now there is infrastructure here to support them."

Smith cited Midwest-based artist Fred Stonehouse, now in his 70s, who had never been to the high

> “The way the art interfaces with the natural world in Joshua Tree is why many artists are drawn to us.”
>
> —Mark Todd



Photos by Aaron Smith.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Sculptural works line the store's walls; the cactus print is by Ariel Lee. Tokyo-born, Los Angeles–based Satoko Okuno showed *Lion*, glazed stoneware, 16.5 x 11 x 6 in., at HeyThere. Vases by ceramist Adam Shrewsbury in front of works by Tim Biskup. A propeller by Seth Drenner, a bowling pin by Matt Adrian, and a man brushing his teeth by Max Kuhn in a group show of whirligigs. Works by Spanish painter and sculptor Nacho Eterno in the gallery space.

desert, but produced new works on paper for his solo show *Talismans*, incorporating desert imagery and foliage with colorful demon-like creatures, some set in ornate scalloped-edge wood frames.

Todd and Smith had spoken casually over the years of opening a gallery together, and after a chance meeting between Todd, his wife, Esther, and a couple who owned a shop in Joshua Tree, HeyThere Projects was born. Smith and Todd bring decades of professional experience in installation and curation to run a professional outfit, without sacrificing a sense of welcome and play in their space—a balance that is at the heart of their mission. Todd's daughter designed and drew the logo, and they write all their gallery tags and prices by hand. They install all the art themselves, working closely with the artists. "It's that kind of personal touch that we lean into," Todd says. "We want everyone to feel like this is their space, too."

HeyThere Projects sits just over a thousand feet from the Joshua Tree National Park Visitor Center, set against the backdrop of the majestic park. They get a nice flow of tourist traffic as a result, with a through line of "outsider" types drawn to the high desert—artists, survivalists, naturists, climbers, alien chasers, rock hounds, even Coachella festival attendees—as well as locals during the area's offseason.

Since taking over the shop side of the original space in 2021, Todd and Smith have expanded into curated, thoughtful, handmade goods and products alongside exclusive art prints and publications. Their calendar is always stacked with workshops, book launches, and musical performances, as well as the town's Art Walk on the second Saturday of every month. They also want to gently bring the world to Joshua Tree, inviting artists from around the country as well as international artists such as Tokyo-born ceramist Satoko Okuno.

Maintaining a multifaceted, evolving, and welcoming space is the reason it's called HeyThere *Projects*—"projects" allows just the right amount of movement and flexibility to be what they need it to be. And in a time when art, artists, and art spaces are arguably more important than ever, what better place to be than with your friends?

◆

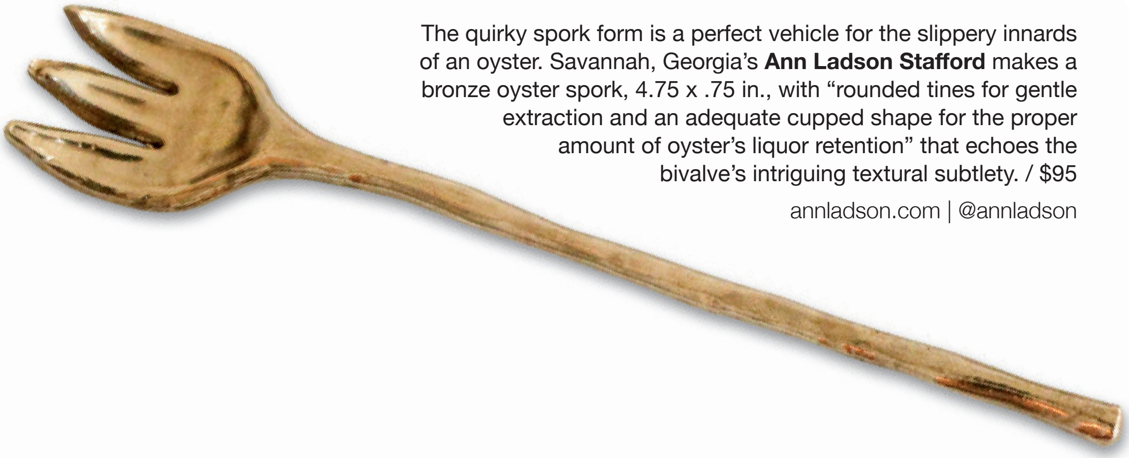
heythereprojects.com | @heythere_projects

Emily Freidenrich is the author of *Almost Lost Arts: Traditional Crafts and the Artisans Keeping Them Alive* (Chronicle Books, 2019). She lives and works in Seattle.

MARKET

Small Bites.

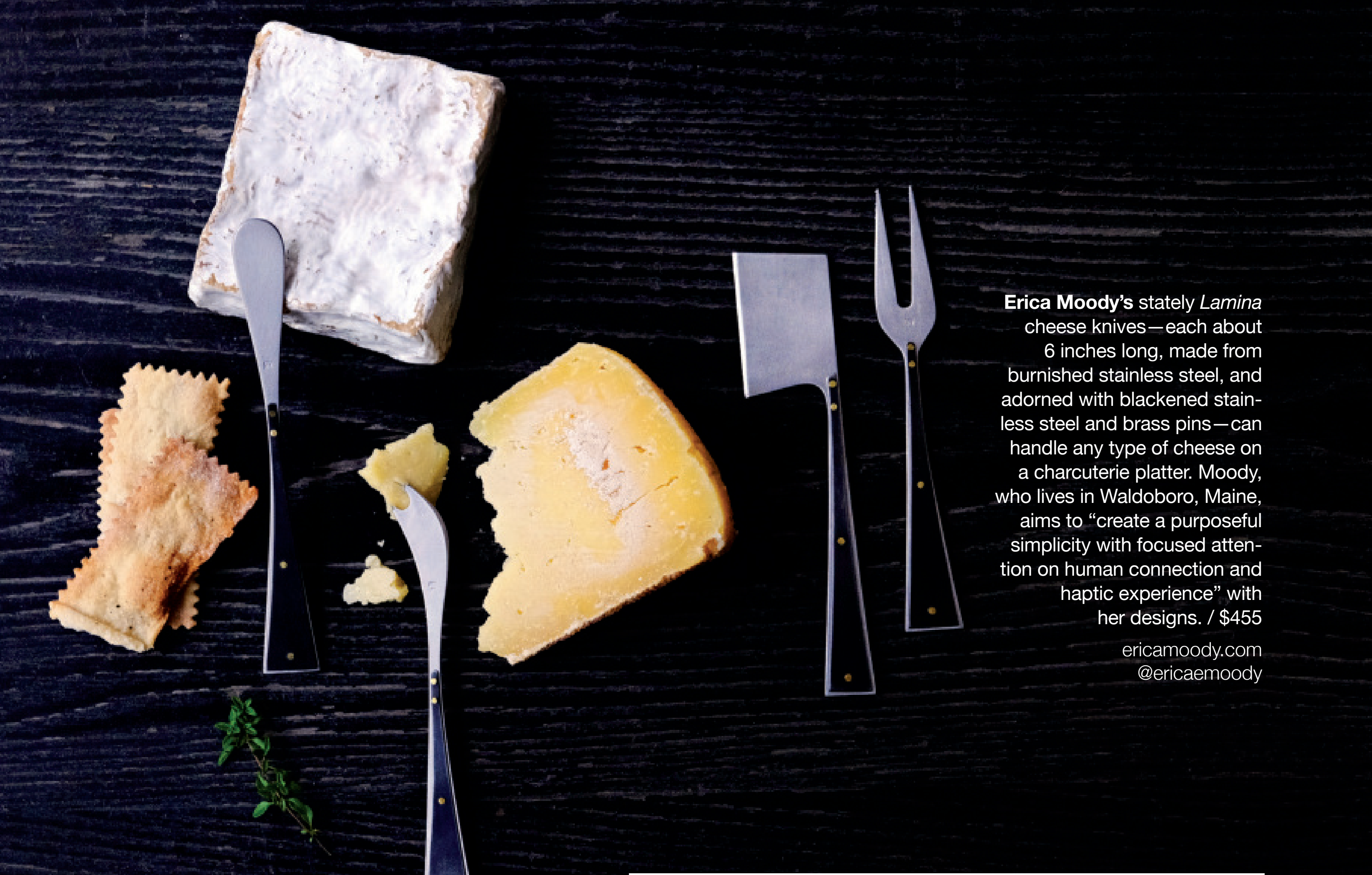
Hosting guests for a meal can be a chance for craft lovers to bring out their favorite handmade wares: Ceramic trays, blown glass cups, woven place mats, and hand-carved trivets all make a table setting beautiful. These metal utensils, from four makers across the country, connect food to the handmade and help us create memories around flavors and the company we share. —Shivaun Watchorn



The quirky spork form is a perfect vehicle for the slippery innards of an oyster. Savannah, Georgia's **Ann Ladson Stafford** makes a bronze oyster spork, 4.75 x .75 in., with "rounded tines for gentle extraction and an adequate cupped shape for the proper amount of oyster's liquor retention" that echoes the bivalve's intriguing textural subtlety. / $95

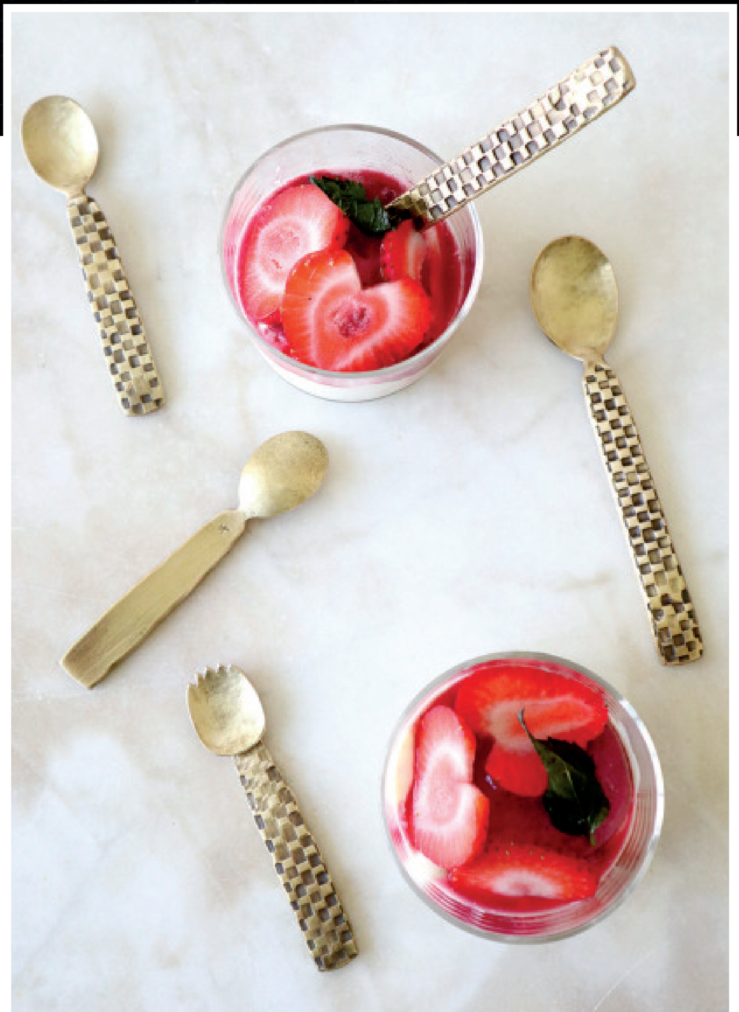
annladson.com | @annladson

TOP: Photo by Ann Ladson Stafford. BOTTOM: Photo by Paulo Placencia.
OPPOSITE TOP: Photo by Erica Moody. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Photo by MDK Studio.



Erica Moody's stately *Lamina* cheese knives—each about 6 inches long, made from burnished stainless steel, and adorned with blackened stainless steel and brass pins—can handle any type of cheese on a charcuterie platter. Moody, who lives in Waldoboro, Maine, aims to "create a purposeful simplicity with focused attention on human connection and haptic experience" with her designs. / $455

ericamoody.com
@ericaemoody



Subtle pattern variations adorn the handles of **Michelle Kwiecien's** *Check* spoons. Available in 5-inch baby spoon, 4-inch spork, and 6.5-inch teaspoon sizes, these forged brass spoons are ideal for serving chutneys and dips. Kwiecien, who is based in Philadelphia, focuses on creating home decor and objects, including vases, wine racks, and candlesticks. / $50

mdk-studio.com | @m.dk.studio

During the lonely days of the pandemic in 2020, Brooklyn-based metalsmith **Heath Wagoner** found himself yearning to host dinner parties again. In response, he created a line of elevated utensils, among them this sterling silver apertivo fork and knife set, each measuring approximately 5 x .75 inches. "I like specific tools for specific dishes, as I believe that elevates the joy of dining," he says. / $450

heathwagoner.com | @hw___studio

BOOKS

“Crumple,” “Pleat,” “Grow,” “Cluster,” “Sprawl,” and “Multiply” are the chapter headings in this survey of a glass master who pushes the medium’s boundaries. That sequence suggests the variety on display, from lighting fixtures that evoke off-kilter planets or exploding snowballs to sculptures resembling translucent stalagmites. Essays and a conversation round out this portrait of an innovator.

JEFF
ZIMMERMAN
GLASS LIGHT SPACE
MONACELLI

JEFF ZIMMERMAN: GLASS LIGHT SPACE
Introduction by Zesty Meyers, essays by
Glenn Adamson and Tony Ingrao, and a conversation
between Zimmerman and Brett Littman
Phaidon, 2025
$69.95

Applied Crystal Pendant, 2018. Glass, brass, and electrical components
Private residence i
interior design by N

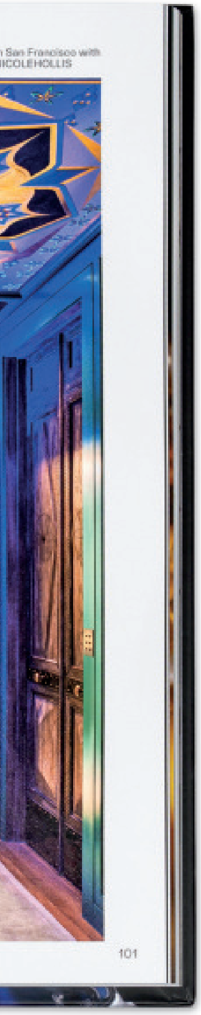
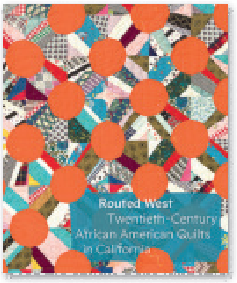

San Francisco with
ICOLEHOLLIS
101

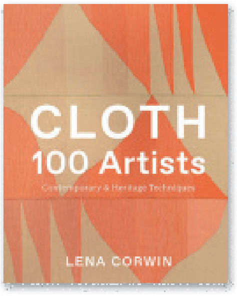
Photo by Sarah Sampedro.


Routed West
Twentieth-Century
African American Quilts
in California

ROUTED WEST: TWENTIETH-CENTURY AFRICAN AMERICAN QUILTS IN CALIFORNIA

Foreword by Julie Rodrigues Widholm; edited with text by Elaine Y. Yau; text by Daphne A. Brooks, Bridget R. Cooks, Basil Kincaid, Eli Leon, Adia Millett, Matthew Villar Miranda, and Wendy M. Thompson; and conversation with Sharbreon Plummer, Carolyn Mazloomi, and A'donna Richardson.
Delmonico/Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, 2025
$65

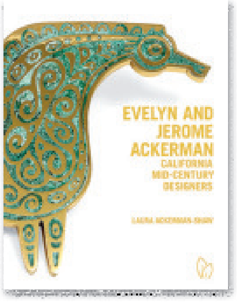
As the Second Great Migration (1940–1970) brought hundreds of thousands of African Americans to the Golden State, many of them carried with them beloved quilts—and quilt-making skills. This sumptuous book begins with a detailed and well-illustrated history of Black quilting in California, then shifts to page after page of images of the gorgeous quilts, plus essays by scholars, curators, and artists.


CLOTH
100 Artists
Contemporary & Heritage Techniques
LENA CORWIN

CLOTH: 100 ARTISTS: CONTEMPORARY AND HERITAGE TECHNIQUES

By Lena Corwin
Abrams, 2025
$29.99

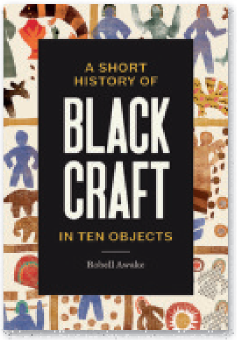
Corwin explores four ways of working with cloth—weaving/braiding, sewing/quilting, knitting/felting, and printing/dyeing—by introducing readers to acclaimed artists working with each method. Each profile includes a quote from the maker and images (with close-ups) of relevant works. Eight amply illustrated DIY projects, created in collaboration with some of the contributing artists, round out the book.


EVELYN AND
JEROME
ACKERMAN
CALIFORNIA
MID-CENTURY
DESIGNERS
LAURA ACKERMAN-SHAW

EVELYN AND JEROME ACKERMAN: CALIFORNIA MID-CENTURY DESIGNERS

By Laura Ackerman-Shaw
Pointed Leaf Press, 2025
$75

The Ackermans embraced the Bauhaus goals of aligning art, craft, and industry to, they once said, "create affordable, beautiful, commercially viable decorative accessories," such as the tapestries, rugs, wood carvings, ceramics, and more sold through their Jenev and ERA Industries companies. Their bold shapes and bright colors typified Southern California's do-your-own-thing aesthetic from the 1950s through the 1970s. Here their daughter tells her parents' story (and her own) while documenting their impact on the wider world of design.


A SHORT
HISTORY OF
BLACK
CRAFT
IN TEN OBJECTS
Robell Awake

A SHORT HISTORY OF BLACK CRAFT IN TEN OBJECTS

By Robell Awake
Princeton Architectural Press, 2025
$24.95

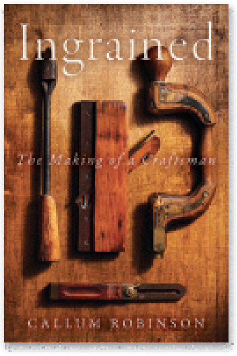
Of the works celebrated here, Gullah Geechee sweetgrass baskets and the quilts of Gee's Bend are the best known. Rounding out the story of Black craft are achievements such as Philip Simmons's wrought iron gates in Charleston, South Carolina, and assemblages and yard shows by James Hampton, Bessie Harvey, and others. Atlanta-based chairmaker and researcher Awake illuminates each object with an essay.

THE ART OF
NATIVE
AMERICAN
WASHOE
BASKETRY

THE ART OF NATIVE AMERICAN WASHOE BASKETRY

By Ann M. Wolfe with JoAnn Nevers, Catherine S. Fowler, Darla Garey-Sage, and Marvin Cohodas; printed with permission from the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California.
Rizzoli Electa, 2025
$40

The elegantly shaped and intricately decorated baskets of the Washoe people of the Lake Tahoe region are celebrated in these richly illustrated pages. Essays explore the role of the baskets in traditional Washoe life, the use of natural fibers in their making, and the entry of the baskets into the world of non-Native collectors, curators, and gallerists.


Ingrained
The Making of a Craftsman
CALLUM ROBINSON

INGRAINED: THE MAKING OF A CRAFTSMAN

By Callum Robinson
Ecco/HarperCollins, 2024
$24

Scottish woodworker Robinson learned the craft from his father, built a business making high-end pieces for posh retailers, then lost his major client and restarted at square one. This eloquent memoir tells of a highflier who returned to the basics: a love of wood, trees, and nature, and a reverence for work done by hand.

FILM

BRINGLE
A TALE OF TWO MAKERS
TOE RIVER ARTS PRESENTS AN EVM FILMS PRODUCTION BRINGLE
DIRECTED BY E. VINCENT MARTINEZ CINEMATOGRAPHY BY FRANKLIN MILLS
WWW.EVMFILMS.COM
TOE RIVER ARTS
Windgate Foundation

BRINGLE: A TALE OF TWO MAKERS (2023)
A film by E. Vincent Martinez
youtube.com/@ToeRiverArts

The careers of two plainspoken, masterful Southern craft artists, 85-year-old twin sisters Cynthia and Edwina Bringle, are the focus of *Bringle*, an hour-long documentary by Atlanta artist and filmmaker E. Vincent Martinez. Made in collaboration with North Carolina–based Toe River Arts, the film, which screened at North Carolina's Tryon International Film Festival in 2023, is now available to watch online.

Martinez—a former student at Penland who is currently working on a film about metalsmith Elizabeth Brim—tells the story of his mentors Cynthia, a potter, and Edwina, a fiber artist. Interviews with the pair and a galaxy of artists, teachers, and collectors in their orbit are intercut with illuminating footage of the sisters at work.

They began their careers in the early 1960s, when the studio craft movement and second-wave feminism were getting off the ground. For Cynthia, making her way in the testosterone-heavy clay world of the day took determination, but, as she says more than once in the film, she was equal to the task because of her disinterest in "marriage and two-plus children" and her deep love of making pots. Those pots, elegantly shaped, are almost always carved and painted too; Cynthia had originally planned to be a painter.

Edwina's weaving is full of color daring. We see her handling warp threads of blue and purple and suggesting that "by the time I finish I could have orange or gray or black or white in the weft threads." The energy that these bold color combinations produce leads an interviewee to liken her to Bauhaus legend Anni Albers. A brief scene of the twins walking and talking leads to a discussion of the creative synergy between them, particularly when it comes to color.

The final segment of the film focuses on Cynthia's half-century at the renowned Penland School of Craft in North Carolina. Starting as the manager of its then-modest clay studio, she went on to build its first gas-fired kiln and teach there for decades, eventually earning formal honors and the informal title "Mayor of Penland."

Five YouTube "master classes" with the Bringles accompany the film. In one, Edwina weaves. The other four are Cynthia's: two devoted to pot making, one to brush making (she sometimes uses dog hair), and one to her salty tips for making a go of a clay career. —Jon Spayde

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Artists' Summer Retreats. While most may think of summertime as a break from school and studies, for artists it can be a time to break away from the studio and seek out a new learning experience. A studio artist's practice can be a solitary activity, and the summer programming at a craft school is an opportunity to experiment, explore, hone skills, and be in community with fellow artists.

The ACC Archives hold rare video recordings, accessible in the ACC Digital Collections, of artists creating new work and learning from mentors at schools such as Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Penland School of Craft, and Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts. Now, thanks to a grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources, we're in the midst of digitizing, preserving, and making accessible more than 200 additional audio and video recordings. We look forward to sharing new gems of content in the coming months in the ACC Digital Collections and on our YouTube channel.

Among ACC's existing collections, a silent film titled *Penland Session 1959* shows artists hand-dyeing and weaving wool yarn, a stone faceting demonstration in the lapidary building, and ceramic artists working with a kick wheel. Another video, titled *Chihuly Carpenter Glass Blowing,* from the summer of 1971 features ACC Gold Medalist Dale Chihuly and his student Jamie Carpenter creating a series of abstract milk glass goblets at Haystack. These goblets later appeared in the exhibition *Glass by Dale Chihuly with Jamie Carpenter* at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, which opened that September.

The same year, the Southeast Regional Assembly of ACC sponsored a series of workshops at Arrowmont School that included a lecture and demonstrations by renowned British ceramist Michael Cardew as well as presentations by enamelist June Schwarcz, ceramist Howard Shapiro, fiber artist Walter Nottingham, and metalsmith Ron Pearson, among others. Video recordings of these workshops can be found by searching for "Arrowmont School Workshops 1971" in the ACC Digital Collections.

While artists may take their summer education seriously, there is certainly time for some playful activities, as seen in images of a one-handed pottery-throwing contest at Haystack discovered in our slide study collection. We wonder which artist was determined to be the winner!

Stay tuned to this column in upcoming issues and to craftcouncil.org to learn about newly released video and audio recordings.—Beth Goodrich

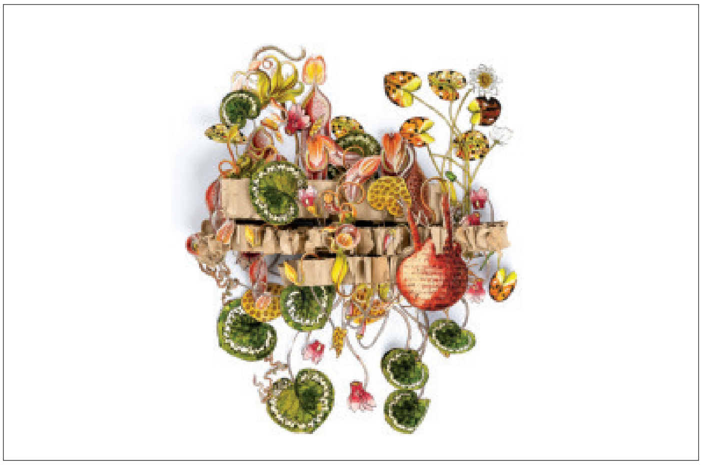
TOP: Cynthia Bringle (left) and Warren MacKenzie (right) face off in a one-handed throwing contest at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, 1976. ABOVE: Blindfolded potters compete in a throwing contest at Haystack.

Photos by Lois Moran, courtesy of the ACC Archives.

Beth Goodrich is the archivist for the American Craft Council. The ACC Archives hold historical documentation of ACC dating back to 1939, as well as the early history of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts/American Craft Museum (now the Museum of Arts and Design) from 1956 to 1990. Many materials from the archives are available online at digital.craftcouncil.org. To schedule research appointments with the archives, contact Beth Goodrich at library@craftcouncil.org.

AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL

ARTIST SHOWCASE



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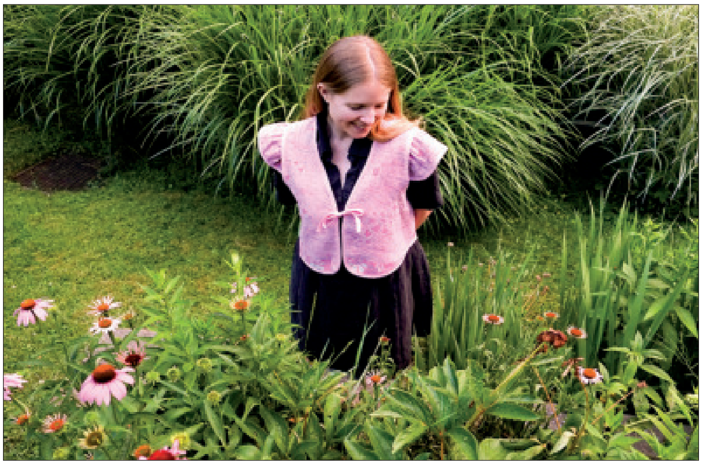

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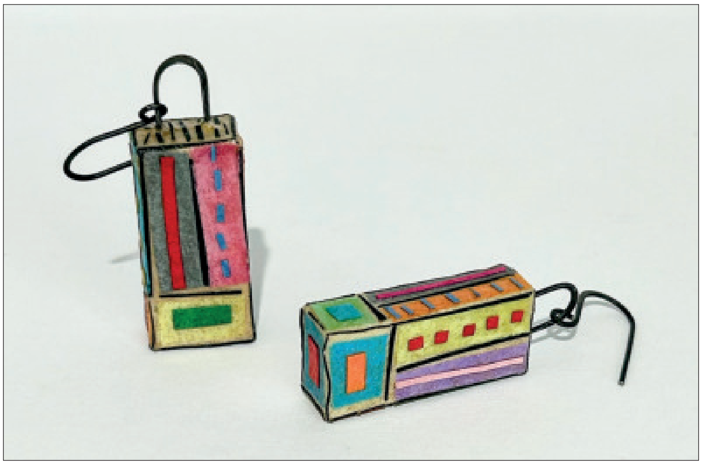

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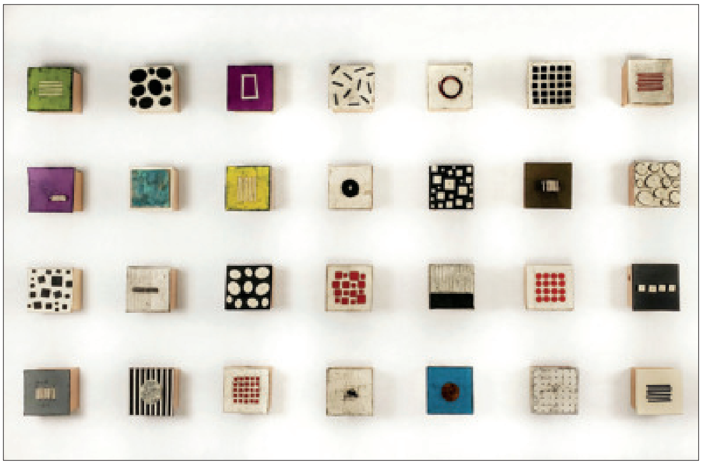

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AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL
NEWS

The American Craft Council is a national nonprofit based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

We foster livelihoods and ways of living grounded in the artful work of the human hand, creating a more joyful, humane, and regenerative world.

We offer visionary storytelling via *American Craft* and other platforms; resources for artists and makers; and events that build community around craft, including American Craft Fest St. Paul, coming to Union Depot June 28–29, 2025.

Learn more at craftcouncil.org.

Photos by Max Franz.

MAKING MEANING

American Craft Made Baltimore, 2025. Photo by Max Franz.

From Our Executive Director

Dear friends and supporters,

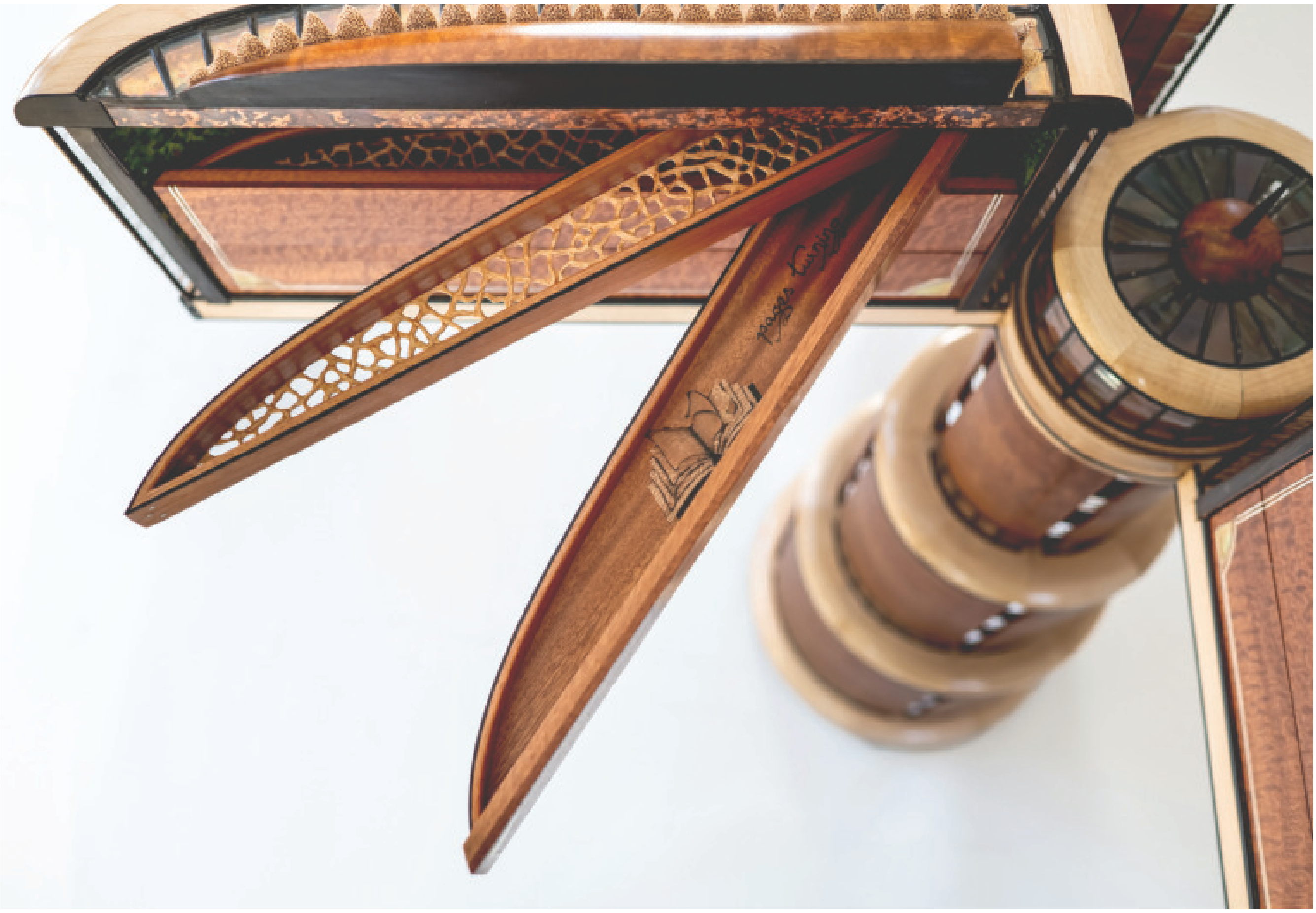
One of the greatest joys and privileges of working for the American Craft Council is the opportunity to meet and work with people across the United States who share a passion for the artful work of the human hand. Over time, many of these collegial relationships with artists, makers, enthusiasts, and advocates evolve into friendships, bringing life to a phrase that's blockprinted on some old placards around the ACC office: *community is what we craft together.*

Longtime ACC member, show artist, and donor Mark Laub, about whom I wrote for this issue of *American Craft* on page 88, has become a friend and role model for living at the nexus of courage and vulnerability. I am grateful to Mark and so many others in the ACC fold for trusting me with stories and perspectives that often merge the deeply personal with thoughts on ACC's past, present, and future.

As I write this message, we are two days from the start of ACC's 48th American Craft Made Baltimore fair, living through extraordinary developments in the life of our country. Uncertainty about the future is palpable. One constructive response is to act with resolve in tending the friendships and broader network of relationships ACC fosters as we work to advance craft-centered livelihoods and ways of living. We will do this at American Craft Made Baltimore, and we'll keep doing it in the months and years ahead.

Is there an "ACC friend" you haven't talked to in a while? If you've taken the time to read this message, I encourage you to reach out to that person and reconnect. Community is what we craft together, and it is powerful.

Andrea Specht
Executive Director, American Craft Council



Mark Laub, Pages Turned, Pages Cut and Burned, 2025, 50 x 52 x 22 in. Photo by Caroline Yang.

Pages Turned

American Craft Council show artist Mark Laub reflects on living and creating with mental illness, and on the impact of ACC.

On first encountering Mark Laub's conceptually complex, exquisitely crafted pieces, it would be easy to assume that "working artist" has been his lifelong career. Not so. It was only 25 years ago that Mark, now in his mid-70s, left the energy trading company he had led as founder and CEO to build a craft-centered life and livelihood.

But another assumption that Mark's friends and collectors have held over the years—that his singular vision and outsized bursts of productivity reflect "a differently wired brain"—is correct. Recently Mark decided to start opening up with people about the treatment-resistant bipolar depression he was first diagnosed with in his late 20s. Reflecting on his decision to end the "days of living in shame and secrets and stigma," Mark noted that "clients and friends said they somehow knew."

Bipolar depression affects Mark's work in a number of ways. On an upswing, he has tremendous productivity and vision; on the other side of the continuum, productivity slows to a snail's pace or disappears entirely. These ups and downs are more manageable in Mark's work as an artist than they were in his corporate career because, as Mark put it, "I am my own boss, subject only to my clients' expectations. As an artist, I feel much better day to day and have the confidence to struggle through and meet challenges."

Art also provides a means to process the struggle of living with mental illness. About *Pages Turned, Pages Cut and Burned*, pictured above, Mark said, "Everything about this art deco styled piece is double entendre…a metaphor for my life with bipolar depression and my recent extended treatment for it."

Mark has been an ACC member for decades and has built close relationships with organization staff. He credits his connection to ACC, including as a participating artist in Baltimore and Saint Paul, Minnesota, shows, as the "number one factor" in his professional success in terms of marketing and building relationships with clients and fellow artists. "Shows

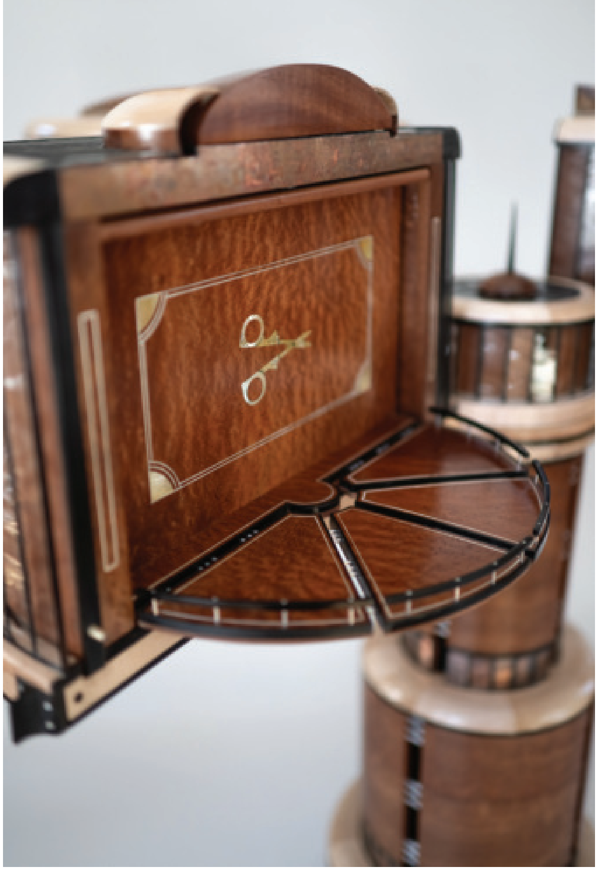


Photo by Caroline Yang.

were always very helpful even when I didn't sell a lot," Mark stated. "I used them to observe people's reaction to my work—to see what they responded to and what they didn't."

Mark's love for ACC translates into his generosity as a donor and member of our Aileen Osborne Webb Legacy Circle. He is passionate about our work to support early career makers, and that concern for rising generations of craft artists is reflected in his newfound openness about mental health and willingness to be interviewed for this article. "Craft is everything to me, and I hope I can help a craftsperson struggling with mental illness know they are not alone."

Mark Laub participated in American Craft Made Baltimore 2025, and in October will celebrate 25 years of doing business as Mark Laub Studios. To see more images of this remarkable piece, go to craftcouncil.org/pagesturned. Learn more about Mark and his work at marklaub.com.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health or experiencing a crisis, call or text 988 to access confidential support from trained counselors available 24/7.

AMERICAN
CRAFT
COUNCIL

You belong here.

Photo by Max Franz.

Whether you're an appreciator, a professional maker, or anything in between, ACC membership is for you.

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Crafting connections.

Photo by Max Franz.

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AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL

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The American Craft Council is committed to justice, inclusiveness, and equity. Drawing on craft's rich legacy of openness and its deep roots in all cultures, the Council will work to create opportunities for creative people from all walks of life.

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ACC founder Aileen Osborn Webb at the Garrison Art Center, 1976. Photo by Marc Slivka.

Aileen Osborn Webb Legacy Circle

Named for ACC's founder, our Legacy Circle recognizes generous supporters who have made planned gifts to support ACC's work into the future. To learn more about joining the circle, please contact executive director Andrea Specht at aspecht@craftcouncil.org.

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This section recognizes gifts made from October 1 through December 31, 2024, in honor or memory of craft artists, appreciators, and advocates, including many who have served as mentors and leading lights within our field.

In memory of Lucretia Davie Chase
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The *American Craft* Marketplace showcases artwork, galleries, events, products, and services.
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Tufted Wood Chair by Seth Peter

Wayne Art Center Call for Entries

CraftForms 2025: 30th International Juried Exhibition of Contemporary Fine Craft
Entry Period: March 12–September 10
Awards: $10,000 | Entry Fee: $50
Juror: Bruce W. Pepich

craftforms.org

AMERICAN craft

Upcoming Issues

Fall 2025:	Adorn
Winter 2026:	Dream
Spring 2026:	Adventure

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The Southeast Fiber Arts Alliance (SEFAA) is a vibrant community celebrating and supporting all textile art forms. We're your go-to textile resource, empowering your creative potential. Explore classes, exhibitions, events, and more at fiberartsalliance.org, and visit us in Atlanta for inspiration and supplies—we're open Tuesday through Saturday!

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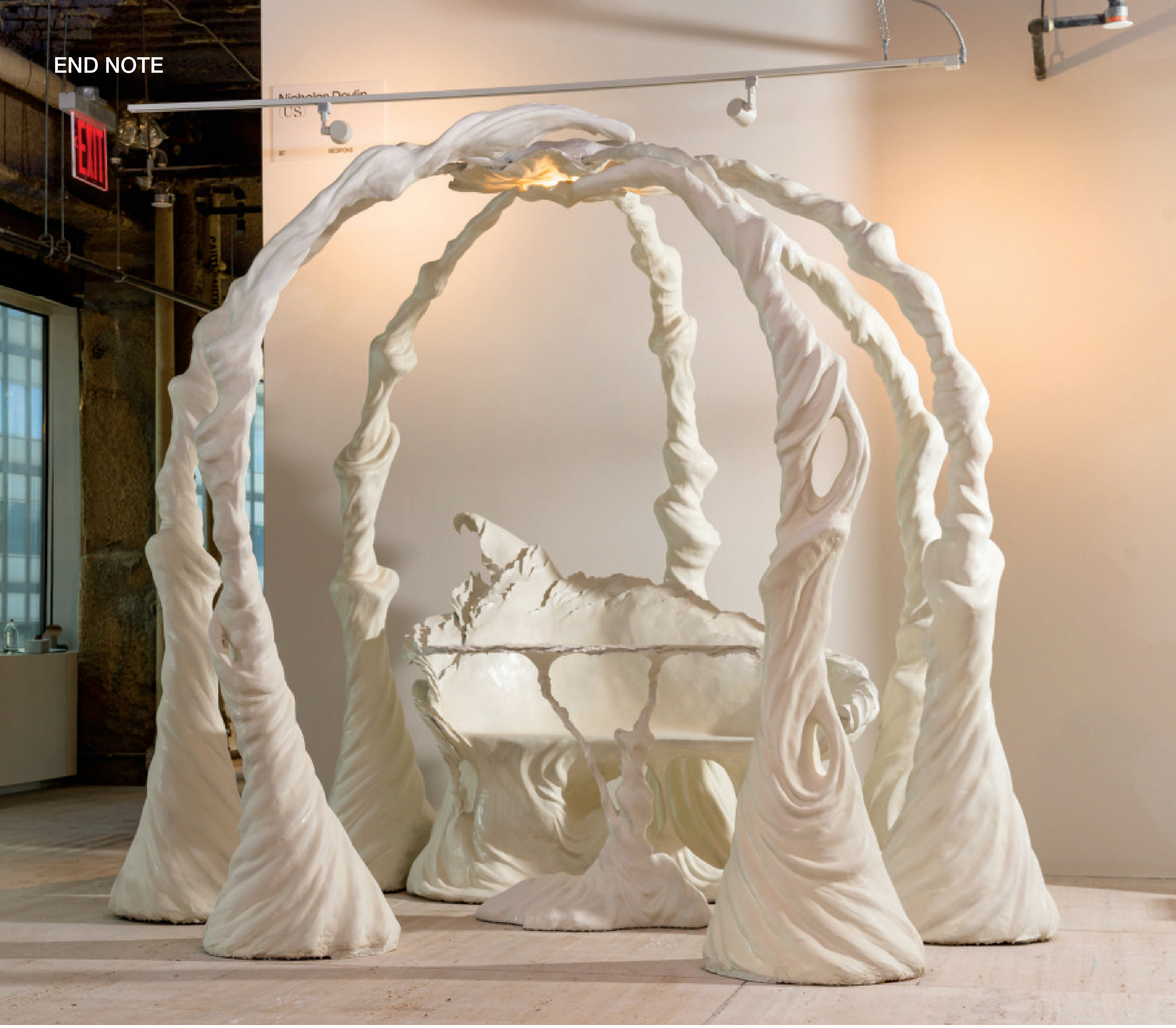
Classified advertising is $3.95 per word, minimum 20 words. Name and address count as words. Example: "A.B. Smith" is three words. Full payment must accompany order, mailed to *American Craft,* 1224 Marshall St. NE, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55413. Or contact advertising@craftcouncil.org when placing classified ads using credit card payment. **Deadline:** June 12, 2025, for the 2025 Fall/September-October-November issue.



The Alchemist's Folly. Citing Neolithic carvings, Celtic and Gaelic mythology, and prehistoric stone circles as touchstones, Nicholas Devlin looks to the mysterious landscapes of the British Isles for inspiration for his surrealistic sculptures in clay, plaster, and other materials. With *The Alchemist's Folly*, 2024, his intention is to transport the viewer to a fantastical realm where the mundane becomes magical. "It's meant to be a sculptural respite," he says.

During the six months it took the Canada-born artist to create the massive sculpture, it skimmed the walls and ceiling of the Brooklyn brownstone where he lives and works. Commissioned by interior designer Harry Heissmann as a giant inhabitable strawberry, the 8-by-8-by-8-foot reinforced plaster, steel, wood, epoxy, and fiberglass gazebo looks more like a meringue or sand dune than the red fruit. Seven twisted columns connect at the top, surrounding a wispy bench-and-table set; a light sits at the crown where the columns meet. "It felt important to make sure you could spend time inside it even at night," Devlin says. "I like this sort of central glow it adds to the piece."

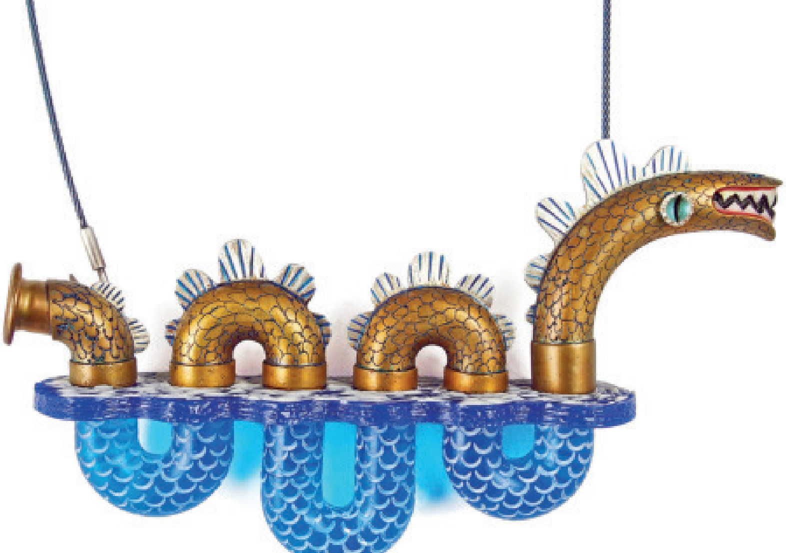
At the heart of the gazebo, the back of the bench crests like a wave. "Ultimately, I wanted the piece to evoke a sense of fantasy," says Devlin, "with layers of the bench and table peeling up and floating away, as if they were dematerializing." —Shivaun Watchorn

◆

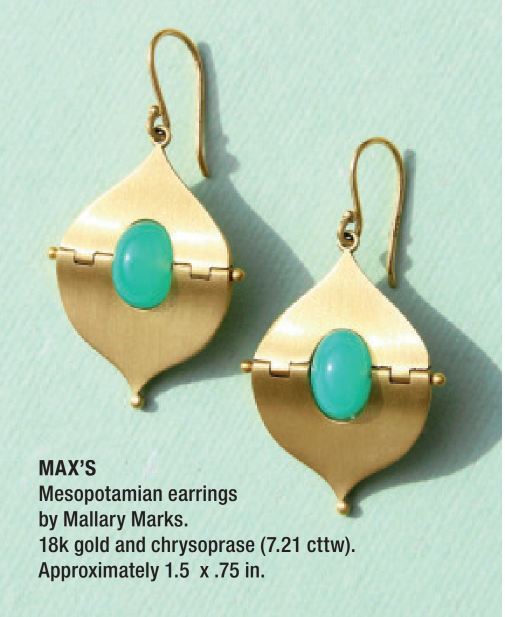
nicholasdevlin.com | @nicholas_devlin

Photo by Simon Leung.

GALLERY GUIDE

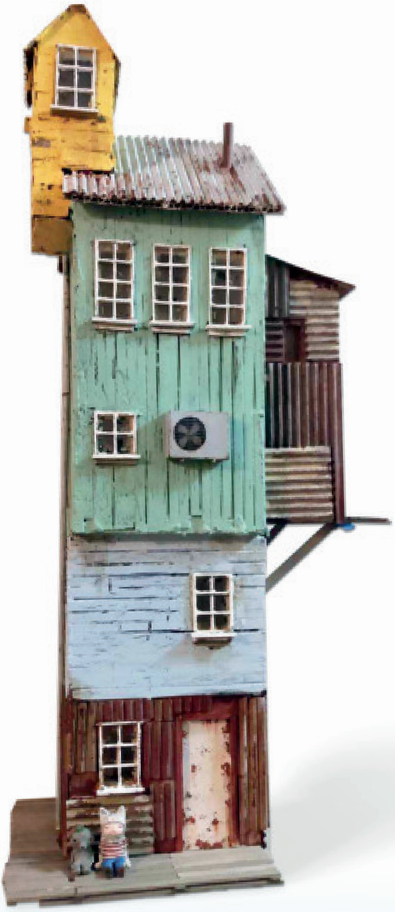


GRAVERS LANE GALLERY
Sea Serpent
by Lisa and Scott Cylinder (2024).
Various brass wind musical instrument tubes,
sterling silver, aluminum, epoxy resin,
tagua nut, acrylic paint; 20" stainless steel necklace.
3.75 x 6.25 x 1.25 in. (pendant).
Calliope exhibition, September 4–October 18.

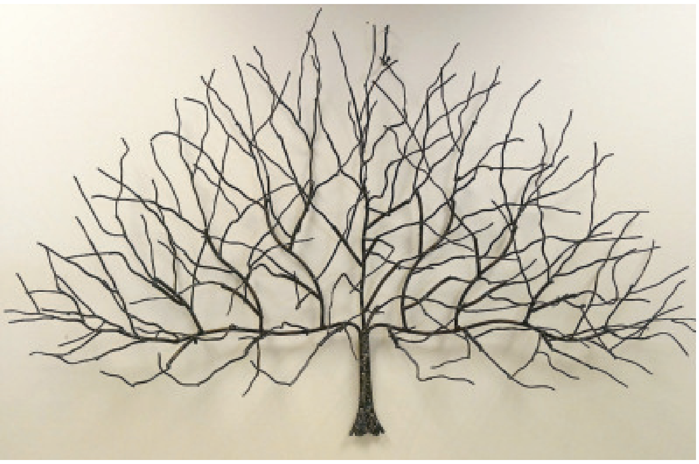


MAX'S
Mesopotamian earrings
by Mallary Marks.
18k gold and chrysoprase (7.21 cttw).
Approximately 1.5 x .75 in.

WHITE BIRD GALLERY
The Incredible Adventures of Romulus and the Sea Troll
by Dmitri Swain.
Mixed media wall sculpture.
32 x 10 x 6.75 in.



THE GRAND HAND GALLERY
Tree
by Chris Swedzinski.
Made from carbon steel.
50 x 54 in.



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SAAM Smithsonian American Art Museum

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